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MAGAZINE JULY 28, 1930

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7 26 VOL. LXXIV  
No. 2

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## If You Want Quick Success and Big Pay in AUTOS



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It's the trained man who gets the good jobs and "Job-Way" Training is COMPLETE, yet so simple, so easy that you get it quick.

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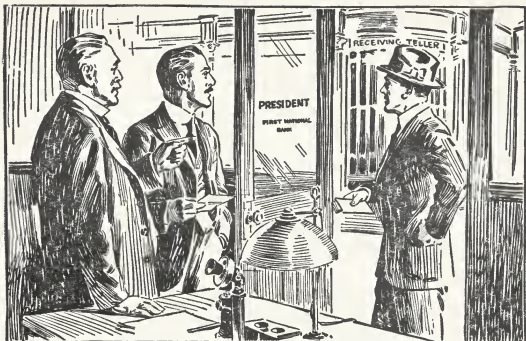
### Do It NOW!

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Name.....  
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## “He saves \$100 a month”

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“Three years ago he started at Browning’s at \$25 a week. Married, had one child, couldn’t save a cent. One day he came in here desperate—wanted to borrow a hundred dollars—wife was sick.

“I said, ‘Billy, I’m going to give you something worth more than a loan—some good advice—and if you’ll follow it I’ll let you have the hundred too. Take up a course with the International Correspondence Schools and put in some of your evenings getting special training. The schools will do wonders for you, I know. We’ve got several I. C. S. men here in the bank.’

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# LOVE STORY

## Magazine

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### CONTENTS FOR JULY 26, 1930

#### CONTINUED STORIES

Trampled Hearts . . . . .	<i>Ruby M. Ayres . . . . .</i>	42
In Six Parts—Part Three		
Stepping Out . . . . .	<i>Georgette MacMillan . . . . .</i>	104
In Six Parts—Part Six		

#### COMPLETE STORIES

The Jade Gown . . . . .	<i>Mary Minton . . . . .</i>	1
The Good Little Sport . . . . .	<i>Jannet M. Walters . . . . .</i>	16
The Magic Lantern . . . . .	<i>Leta Zoe Adams . . . . .</i>	30
An Old-fashioned Girl . . . . .	<i>Marjorie Gleyre . . . . .</i>	66
Love's Miracle . . . . .	<i>Barbara West . . . . .</i>	76
A Game For Two . . . . .	<i>H. C. Kent . . . . .</i>	93
When Jealousy Was Bliss . . . . .	<i>Iris Oakley . . . . .</i>	129

#### POETRY

Beloved . . . . .	<i>H. H. Fariss . . . . .</i>	29
As a Vine to a Trellis . . . . .	<i>Judith Hersey . . . . .</i>	41
When You're Away . . . . .	<i>Helen K. Roberts . . . . .</i>	75
Dream Visions . . . . .	<i>A. Leslie . . . . .</i>	92

#### DEPARTMENTS

Your Stars Will Tell . . . . .	<i>Wynn . . . . .</i>	136
The Friendliest Corner . . . . .	<i>Mary Morris . . . . .</i>	143
The Friend In Need . . . . .	<i>Laura Alston Brown . . . . .</i>	148

"His Unhappy Bride," by Madge Fenton, beginning in next week's issue.

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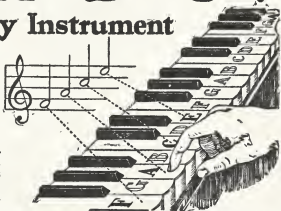
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At  
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**[But Now I Can Face the Largest Audience  
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THE annual banquet of our Association—the biggest men in the industry present—and without warning, the Chairman called on me to speak—and my mind went blank! I half rose, bowed awkwardly and mumbled, "I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me today," and dropped back in my chair.

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Hundreds of people who suffered for years from asthma and bronchial coughs, state that their trouble left and has not returned. Their letters and a booklet of vital information will be sent free by Nacor Medicine Co., 773 State Life Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind. Write for this free information, and find out how thousands have found lasting relief.

# Just Say 20 Words To Ladies

*And I Pay You Cash For It*



Here's an utterly new, easy way for honest men and women to make money in full or spare time and also the strangest offer we have ever made. No need to sell a thing. Just introduce Van to 10 ladies and say 20 magic words and this million-dollar company will pay you cash. This is the revolutionary new plan of C. W. Van De Mark, the famous sales genius who has already put more than 25,000 men and women on the road to prosperity. "Conservative" business leaders called Van "crazy" for making this radical cash pay agreement. They said it would ruin "conservative" traditions. Cooler heads said it would ruin a master stroke that would boost prosperity—for Van will now actually pay you a cash penalty if you don't make at least \$15 the very first day.

## No Need To Sell Anything TO GET YOUR CASH PAY

Now Van himself reveals the sensational truth! Countless housewives learned that they can make big savings on our amazing bargain offers. So in almost no time the sale of our products has expanded almost to the "bursting" point. Now we must hurry and employ 1100 more local men and women to take care of regular customers in each town. Big money for our representatives means nothing to us from now on! To save time I now offer every honest man and woman steady work and will pay cash for just a few hours of their time.

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I will not only pay you an actual cash penalty if your first 10 calls do not give you a big profit—but I allow you to make a big profit on every order my customers give you. So what is to stop you from making as high as \$35 in a day like some of my other "partners"? I don't let you risk one penny. To show you that I do things in a big way, I will send you \$13.00 worth of my products (retail value) to start you. Don't send a cent for this daring offer—just rush application opposite. I'll tell you a priceless secret that will get others to make money for you. If you are a married woman you can surely devote a few spare hours a day. My plan is a funny one. Some of my woman "partners" have made more money in a single day than their husbands make.

**I Send You  
\$13 Worth  
of Goods  
(Retail Value)  
Without  
Risk to You  
To Start You  
Just Send Coupon**

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Just tell me how much you want.

**\$15 in a Day Full Time?**

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and I will send my Written Agreement, legal and binding upon me. The more time you devote to this business the more money you get.—Van.

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Curtis W. Van De Mark, President  
The Health-O Quality Products Co.

Dept. 1094-G. G., Health-O Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Van: I apply for opening as "partner" to start on your cash pay agreement. Send offer of \$13.00 worth of products (retail value) and guarantee. This is not an order—send nothing C.O.D. I risk nothing.

I want \$..... per hour.

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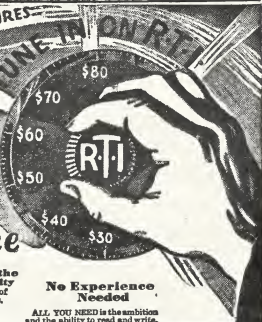
And, positively everyone taking complete advantage of this opportunity will be rewarded. Duplicate prizes in case of ties. Send your answer now. Win the \$2,320.00 or a Buick Sedan and \$1,000.00 cash Extra for promptness.

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# The Jade Gown

By Mary Minton

PAMELA had never wanted anything so badly as the jade-and-gold gown she was packing to take to Maud Vyner.

She buried her face in its soft folds wistfully. Just to see herself in it for one minute! Just to pretend she belonged to the world which always wore lovely dresses like this! She knew it would suit her. With her creamy complexion and tawny hair, Pamela could wear almost any color. But to-day her beauty was marred by the unshed tears in her eyes and by the way her lower lip drooped. She looked ill.

LS-1B

She felt miserable, unhappy and more than usually lonely. In her job as sales-girl in Madame Fleurette's dress shop, she did not make many friends, and life seemed a continual round of work. If only there were some one in the world who cared for her!

Hesitantly she stood with the dress in her hand. It would not take a minute to slip it on, and no one would ever know. Madame had already gone, and all Pamela had to do was to lock up the shop and deliver the gown.

She would be quite safe if—— An

odd feeling went through her that in some way or other the dress would influence her destiny. It was queer the feelings it evoked in her, almost as though the thing were challenging her.

Of course, it was foolish to feel as if the jade-and-gold creation meant any more than the others she handled every day. It was just that it appealed to her.

Acting on a sudden resolution she laid the dress in its box and covered it with tissue paper, putting in the gold-brocade evening wrap which went with it and the golden slippers and stockings.

After all, what was the use of trying it on? Her part in life was to sell pretty clothes, not to wear them.

It was getting late, too, and madame had been insistent that the package should be delivered punctually at seven.

Pamela looked at the clock. She had wasted too much time already, she found, and hurriedly slipping on her coat and hat, and with the dress box under her arm, she left the shop, locking the door after her.

She opened her purse and added up her change. There was only a small amount, and a taxi would cost at least fifty cents. But it was worth fifty cents to save her job, and with a sense of recklessness she hailed a passing taxi.

Arriving in front of the huge apartment house on Park Avenue she looked around her quickly. The sight of the uniformed man who opened the taxi door for her and waited while she paid the driver frightened her.

When he saw that she had a package he looked at her severely.

"The service entrance is on the side street," he said coldly.

Pamela, feeling sick at heart, hurried around to the side entrance and was soon shooting up in the elevator to the sixth floor where the Vyners lived.

She hurried down the long corridor, looking at the numbers on each door. She turned a corner in the corridor and as she did so she bumped into a man so

violently that her box was knocked out of her hand.

"I'm so sorry," he said.

Pamela's heart missed a beat. Never had she seen any one quite so attractive. He was tall, broad-shouldered and with keen gray eyes.

He picked up her box and returned it with a smile.

"Do you know where Mr. Vyner's apartment is?" Pamela asked.

For a second he regarded her interestedly, curiously almost. Then he answered:

"He lives just down the hall. I'm going past his door—I'll point it out to you."

A few seconds later she had said good-by to the stranger and was knocking at Mr. Vyner's door.

There was the chance that he was not Mrs. Maud Vyner's husband, but it was worth taking the risk.

The door was opened by a man who looked at her in surprise.

"Do you want any one?" he asked.

"Yes. Does Mrs. Maud Vyner live here?" she queried.

He nodded shortly.

"Yes," he replied, and added: "I am her husband."

Pamela sighed with relief. So she had found the right address.

"Oh, I'm so glad. Can I see her?" she asked quickly. "I brought this gown for her, and she was most anxious to have it by seven. I'm awfully late, I know, but I do hope she won't be angry."

"No, she won't be angry," Rafe Vyner assured her. "Please come in."

She followed him into the apartment, and he showed her into a daintily furnished boudoir in which a bright fire was burning.

"Wait here," he said. "I will be back in a moment."

When he had gone Pamela was conscious of a feeling of uneasiness. Rafe Vyner's manner was strained and un-

easy. What was the reason? She was conscious of a feeling of unrest as she listened. She could not hear voices. Everywhere was silence.

He reëntered the room almost immediately.

"My wife wants to see the dress on you," he remarked. "Those are the pearls which go with it and this ring. Put them on, too, will you? I'll be back in about ten minutes. Please hurry. It is very urgent."

Pamela frowned as she found herself alone again, and without knowing quite why she did it, she turned the key in the lock of the door.

Suddenly she knew she was afraid. There was something odd about Rafe Vyner.

She slipped out of her own dress and put on the jade-and-gold one, gazing at her lovely reflection a little fearfully in the mirror.

Her wish had come true. She was actually wearing the dress she had coveted, yet now it gave her no thrill, only an instinctive feeling of fear.

There was a knock on the door, and a little breathlessly she opened it.

Rafe Vyner stood outside, and she saw that he had changed into evening clothes. There was a sardonic smile on his face as his gaze rested on her.

"Splendid!" he said. "You look wonderful! Somehow, I knew you would, once you were in smart clothes."

"Can I see Mrs. Vyner?" Pamela asked, her sense of uneasiness growing. "It's getting late, and if she has to change into——"

"She hasn't got to change," the man answered, and he winced slightly as he spoke. Then his words came quickly: "I don't know who you are or anything about you, but I'm going to trust you. I am due at the Hotel Astorian at eight—for dinner. Will you come with me?" As Pamela gave a cry of astonishment he raised his hand as if to silence her, and finished: "Will you come with me

and take your place—just for this evening—as my wife?"

For a moment Pamela stared at him aghast.

"How dare you?" she said at last.

"I dare anything," Rafe Vyner returned grimly. "I am not insulting you. You don't call it an insult when a man offers you work, do you?" As she did not reply he went on: "That is what I'm doing, and I want you to look at it like that. This is just a business proposition. My wife has gone away because I won't give her the freedom she wants. I'm not going into details," he added wearily, "but her desertion now may mean a great loss to me. She knows it. That is why she has gone." There was a bitterness in his voice that he could not hide.

"But I don't understand——" Pamela began.

"I will explain," he said. "My uncle, whose heir I am, is over here from England on a visit. He knows I'm married and he wants to see my wife. He is a dear old chap, but if for one minute he thought that things had gone wrong with the marriage he would blame me. I am absolutely dependent on him. He has taught me to be useless, taught me not to work, and the very fact of my marriage being a failure would be enough to make him stop my allowance, and I cannot manage without it. It is not fair that I should. Maud knew that, and it is only spite which has made her leave me just now. I came in half an hour ago to find she had gone. When you knocked at the door I hoped she had come back."

He laughed grimly as he handed her a note.

"Read that," he said tonelessly. "It is the only communication she left when she went away."

I've told you I want my freedom, and I mean to get it—somehow. Once again I have begged of you to let me divorce you and you have refused. Very well, I'll make you pay.

When you go to your uncle to-night you will go alone. I don't think you'll be able to give a good excuse for my being away, and I only hope he will do what I anticipate—cut off your allowance. When you are penniless, Rafe, it will be my turn to dictate.

MAUD.

It was a heartless letter, and suddenly all fear left Pamela as she read it and realized it was genuine. No wonder Rafe Vyner looked strange and worried.

"Can't you explain to your uncle?" she asked, an anxious note in her voice.

"Impossible!" came the reply. "He only sees one point of view—his own—that marriages are not made to be broken."

"What would you want me to do?" she queried slowly.

"Just have dinner with me, and be nice to my uncle. I give you my word as soon as dinner is over, and he goes back to his hotel, you will be free to go." He paused before he went on: "For your services to-night I will give you two hundred dollars."

Two hundred dollars! The sum took Pamela's breath away. It would mean something in the bank, something to fall back upon if she were out of work.

The man turned to the door and made as if to go out, then he hesitated, waiting.

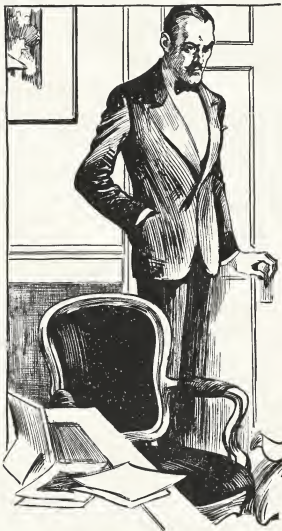
She sank down onto a couch, her head in her hand, while her thoughts whirled. Dare she do what he asked her?

"All right," she told him at last. "I'll do it!"

Pamela stepped from the luxurious car and walked up the steps of the Hotel Astorian on Rafe Vyner's arm, too excited to be really nervous.

The orchestra in the Orchid Room was playing soft music as she and the man who was supposed to be her husband went in, and she felt a sudden joy. It was good to belong to the world of luxury like this and not to be outside. It must be wonderful to have money to spend.

The clink of glasses, the gay colors and lights, the dull buzz of light-hearted conversation, all went to her head like wine. She felt like a new person.



*For a moment Pamela stared at*

William Vyner, the uncle of the man she had agreed to help, had no suspicions, and greeted her affectionately.

"Well, I've seen you and your wife, Rafe," he said at last when they had dined, "and I'm satisfied. If you ever want to come over and live with me, you will be welcome. But I'm glad my visit is over. I sail to-morrow at noon."

"Then it is good-by to-night," Pamela said.

"It is good-by now." He laughed as

he rose and turned to Rafe Vyner. "No, don't come with me. You two can enjoy yourselves a little longer. I'm an old man and rather tired. I am going back to my hotel."

The younger man bowed to Pamela.

"If you will excuse me I will just see him into a taxi," he said.

She smiled at him, feeling extraordinarily happy as she said good-by to William Vyner, and watched the two men disappear together into the lobby.



him aghast. "How dare you?" she said at last.

Then suddenly her sense of security was shattered and fear took hold of her as a girl crossed the room and came up to her with outstretched hand.

"I am Doria Lindley," she exclaimed. "I expect you have heard Rafe talk of me. We knew each other in London when we were both on a visit there."

"Oh, yes!" Pamela flushed nervously as the other went on:

"I feel a little annoyed that he never introduced me to you before, Mrs. Vyner. I thought it a good opportunity to approach you now—I didn't like to come up before."

Pamela was white as a strained silence fell. She did not know what to say, what to do. If only Rafe Vy

ner would come back. He would be able to save the situation.

Then with a sense of overpowering relief she saw him advancing toward her, and there was a frown on his face as he looked at her companion.

"I have introduced myself," the other girl said, as her sharp eyes fixed themselves on his face. "You know, it was very mean of you not to let me know what a charming wife you had!"

There was a strange note in her voice and Pamela wondered if she suspected anything.

But the man whose wife she was pretending to be replied carelessly, they said good-by, and a few minutes later they reached the street.

Outside her companion regarded her gravely as he offered her an envelope.

"You will find two hundred dollars in there," he informed her, "and if you'll tell me how much that outfit you have on is worth, I'll send madame a check."

"Where shall I send the clothes?"

Pamela asked, then added, "Mrs. Vyner agreed to pay madame three hundred dollars for the dress and wrap."

"I don't care where you send the clothes. In fact, I think that you had better keep them," he added and held out his hand. "You've done me a great service. Thank you and good-by." Without another word he turned and left her.

Pamela looked after him, her eyes thoughtful. For one night she had known what it was to really live!

She turned to call a taxi, then saw a bus coming toward her and decided to take it. After all, she did not have money to spend so freely on taxis.

She hurried out into the street to catch the bus, but just as she reached it the conductor pressed the bell and it went on its way.

Pamela never knew quite how it happened, but just as she tried to stop running she whirled around dizzily and then felt herself falling. Excruciating

pain shot through her ankle, and a sense of utter helplessness took hold of her as she sank to the ground. The next moment as she tried to rise, a cry of pain left her lips.

A man hurried to her and put out his hand.

"Let me help you!" he exclaimed. "You have twisted your ankle rather badly, but I don't really think there is much wrong with it."

As she clung to him helplessly, a rich color stole over her face as she met his friendly gaze, and recognized him. Her rescuer was the man against whom she had collided earlier in the evening and who had directed her to Rafe Vyner's apartment!

She stood looking at him shyly, wondering if he would recognize her. But it was not likely that he would connect the plainly dressed girl carrying a dress box with her now she was resplendent in the jade-and-gold gown with its brocade wrap and slippers and stockings to match.

"It is very kind of you," she murmured. "If you could just help me to the pavement?"

"We have met before?" he asked, a note of curiosity in his voice.

She shook her head. She did not know why, but she wanted to hide from him the fact that they had met.

Her companion smiled as he piloted her across the street.

"You had better come in here and have some coffee," he remarked. "You are upset. It is quite a decent restaurant, so you need not mind."

She smiled gratefully at him as she entered the restaurant. Her heart beat quickly as she looked down at the jade-and-gold dress. She had been right. There was something uncanny about it, for already it had brought her adventure!

As they faced each other across the table he spoke quietly.

"Feel better?" he asked. "Take



things quietly. There is no need to hurry."

Then he regarded her earnestly for a moment.

"Surely we have met before?" he queried, and this time his voice was insistent, though he spoke very low.

is not my fault that I don't work, too. As it is, I do the next best thing. I see to all my tenants and their wants." He smiled whimsically. "Here is the coffee. Can't we feel we have been properly introduced?" he asked. "I'd like to call and see how you are to-morrow."



*"Well, I've seen you and your wife, Rafe," he said at last when they had dined, "and I'm satisfied."*

Fear clutched at Pamela's heart.

Should she tell him the truth? Then some inner warning prompted her.

"No," she said. "I'm quite sure we haven't." But she hated herself for the lie.

"I don't generally forget faces," he remarked quietly.

"I'm quite sure we have not met," she said. "My name is Pamela Thornton—and I work for my living," she said with a defiant little tilt of the head.

"I admire you for it," he replied. "My name is Desmond Lorrimer and it

A frightened look came into her eyes. If he called on her to-morrow he would see her wearing the plain suit in which he had met her before, and which Rafe Vynner had sent back to her rooms by messenger.

Then she remembered her two hundred dollars, the money which she had earned that night. She could afford to buy clothes now.

"Do let me come," he urged. "Don't you realize that Fate let us meet to-day—and Fate never does things without a purpose?"

Pamela thought rapidly. Madame was not too generous in letting her have any extra time off. There was no chance of being free until Saturday.

"I can't see you until the end of the week," she told him. "But here is my address."

"Then, at the end of the week we will meet," he replied, and she flushed as he smiled into her eyes.

"My ankle is not nearly so painful now," she remarked rising. "If I could get on a bus!"

But on reaching the street he hailed a passing taxi.

"Good-by until Saturday," he said as he helped her in. "I shall be looking forward to seeing you."

As Pamela sat back in the darkness she felt strangely thrilled. There was something about Desmond Lorrimer which appealed to her. She wanted to see him again—but she did not want him to recognize her as the girl who had been searching for Rafe Vyner's apartment.

For the rest of the week she was wrapped in a mantle of excitement, looking forward to seeing Desmond Lorrimer again.

She took great care with her toilet on Saturday, wanting to look her best.

As she went out of her room she picked up her morning newspaper from the stand in the hall. When she had settled herself in a corner of the bus which took her to her work, and opened the paper, she stifled an exclamation.

On the center page was the photograph of two people. One was Doria Lindley, who knew her secret, and the other was Desmond Lorrimer, and Pamela read that it was rumored they were engaged to be married!

Reading the paragraph through, Pamela knew the reason for her quickened heartbeats whenever she allowed herself to think of Desmond Lorrimer.

It was no use trying to hide it from herself any longer. She had fallen in

love with a man who was practically a stranger to her!

Desmond Lorrimer and Doria Lindley! Oh, it was impossible.

She never quite knew how she lived through that morning. There was an ache in her heart, and she was conscious of a dreary feeling that would not be dismissed.

The man she knew she loved had pretended he wanted to see her again, when all the time he must have been laughing at her.

She made her way back to her room when the shop closed. The meeting to which she had looked forward was impossible now.

She told herself she never wanted to see Desmond Lorrimer again. Wearily she put her key in the door of her rooming house and opened it, with the thought that the jade-and-gold dress had brought her nothing but misery. She had been foolish even to think that such a gown could have been meant for her.

As she entered the hall she felt a hand on her shoulder.

"You're not going to cut me!" a voice said quickly.

She turned around, startled, to find herself looking into the eyes of Desmond Lorrimer.

For a minute she felt the madness of longing take possession of her. It was useless, she could not shut her love for him out of her heart, and as she gazed up at him there was a pleading look in her eyes.

"What is wrong?" he asked.

The gentle note in his voice roused a new spirit in her, a reckless spirit which urged her to steal a few moments' happiness while she could.

She put out her hands as though to push him away, but he caught them in his own instead and grimly led her into the sitting room which was empty.

She took off her hat and coat and sank down onto the couch despondently,

and suddenly buried her face in her hands.

"You are afraid," he whispered.

She felt an exquisite thrill as his arms went around her.

She lifted up her face and her lips, a little apart, revealed the softness of their curves. In her eyes was a hurt look which went straight to his heart.

"Pamela," he exclaimed, and his voice was low, "come out with me—now. There is something I want to tell you."

As he spoke he bent his head, and their lips met in their first kiss.

She must take this chance of happiness. She would pretend Doria Lindley did not exist. For the rest of the day, at least, she would taste of joy.

"I'll come," she said, and he smiled gladly, helping her on with her coat.

"I *kaew* you would not fail me," he remarked. "My car is just around the corner. I'm going to take you for a run into the country."

His arm was through hers, his hand had closed around her own, and there was magic in the touch of his fingers.

It seemed that nothing in the world mattered but themselves.

As he helped her into the car the blood in her veins seemed to freeze as she looked up and saw Doria Lindley get out of a taxi that had drawn up behind them—Doria, who believed she was Rafe Vyner's wife, and the girl to whom Desmond Lorrimer was supposed to be engaged!

What strange trick of Fate was responsible for this encounter?

Her companion had not noticed the girl coming toward them with a surprised look on her face. In a minute she would be calling her "Mrs. Vyner," and then—

Pamela was filled with terror.

"Go on quickly," she managed to say. "Oh, please, there is some one coming I don't want to see."

Obediently Desmond Lorrimer shifted into his gear, and the car shot forward.

Pamela, glancing back, saw that Doria Lindley was looking after them, her brows drawn together as anger and bewilderment chased each other across her face.

Desmond Lorrimer had little to say until they were out of New York. Then he drew up before an old-fashioned hotel in a small village.

"We'll lunch here," he said.

Pamela was still feeling reckless. As they entered the hotel he took her arm with a proprietary hand, and she could not help feeling bitter. Had he no thought for Doria Lindley?

They sat at a small table hidden away in a corner, and suddenly he was bending toward her, and on the table in front of her lay a flashing sapphire ring.

"The Lorrimer sapphire," he told her quietly, and his voice thrilled on a new and wonderful note as he added: "Darling, I want you to wear it."

She looked from the ring to her companion, and her face flushed.

"But—but you are going to marry Doria Lindley," she gasped. "I saw it in the paper this morning."

"My dear," he said with a laugh, "that is a mistake. I can't think how it appeared. I have already sent a contradiction to the papers, and I expect Doria will be as annoyed about it as I am. I have known her for years—but only as a friend."

Pamela remembered the look of anger on Doria Lindley's face, and she guessed, too, how the notice had reached publication—through Doria.

But she had little time to ponder on the mystery, for she was in his arms, and he was taking it for granted that she loved him.

"It was that jade gown," he said later. "You looked wonderful in it."

A shadow came into Pamela's eyes. She was beginning to be afraid of the jade gown, afraid of its uncanny power to bring startling events into her life.



*A man hurried to her and put out his hand. "Let me help you!" he exclaimed. "You have twisted your ankle rather badly."*

"Say you love me," he commanded. "Say that nothing matters but our love. We'll be married almost at once——"

"I must give madame notice first," she said tremulously.

The rest of her sentence died away as he took her lips, fiercely, possessively this time, with a force which seemed to sear her very soul.

"Then give in your notice on Monday. I can't wait," he told her.

In this new joy she forgot the secret which, innocent though it was, she wished to keep from him.

Nothing mattered but Desmond and the wonder of their love.

Days passed with lightning speed and happiness. Pamela lived in a new world—a world wherein some one really cared for her. But one day her fiancé's face showed anxiety.

"I have to go abroad—to Brussels," he told her. "An old friend of my father is ill, and he has no one else but me. I must go."

There seemed something ominous in this suggestion of their being parted so soon, and her voice was low as she asked:

"You'll be away long?"

"Only as long as I have to," he told her, holding her close against his heart.

A month passed after his departure, with no sign of his returning, and Pamela grew more and more afraid, in spite of the fact that his letters came regularly and were always reassuring. She could not forget the angry look of bewilderment in Doria Lindley's eyes.

She had been promoted to a manikin by madame, and she was listless and dispirited when her employer came to her.

"Be quick," said madame. "You are wearing the 'Jade Fountain' creation this afternoon, and I want it to look its very best."

Pamela sighed. Another jade dress! She felt she hated the color now. Ever since she had first worn the jade-and-gold gown she had known new and disturbing happenings, and her greatest emotion now was fear—fear that she might lose Desmond Lorrimer's love.

She dressed mechanically. The "Jade Fountain" dress was very much like the one Rafe Vyner had given her, cut in the same graceful folds, the same beautiful draperies, and it roused within her recollections which were both disturbing and sweet.

When she was ready she walked onto the revolving stage from which the manikins displayed the gowns, and as she did so, she saw in the very front row of watching clients the girl who knew her as Mrs. Vyner! It was Doria Lindley—Doria, who she guessed instinctively was in love with Desmond Lorrimer!

She strove to conquer the feeling of faintness which took hold of her, managing to pose and eventually walk off the stage in spite of the consciousness of the other girl's eyes resting on her.

What would happen? Had Doria Lindley recognized her?

The moments passed slowly, and through a gap in the curtain she saw Doria talking animatedly to madame. But a moment later she left the salon, and Pamela breathed a prayer of thankfulness.

So the other girl had not recognized her! Pamela knew an overwhelming relief.

Once outside the shop, Doria Lindley's face grew somber. She was remembering the night when Rafe Vyner had dined with his uncle. She had recognized Pamela as the girl who had been with him, posing as his wife! The girl in the jade gown was not Maud Vyner, but Pamela Thornton, and she had learned from Madame Fleurette, Pamela's employer, that she had been with her over a year. And it was Pamela Thornton she had seen out with Desmond Lorrimer, the man she herself loved!

She had fought to win Desmond Lorrimer, and yet she had failed. The engagement announcement in the newspaper had been supplied by herself. She had thought that perhaps he would not deny it, would indeed recognize it.

She had known humiliation at his calm amusement when he had phoned her about it.

"I knew you would take it as a joke, too," he had said.

A joke, when all her heart was crying out for him! When she was ready to lie, to cheat, in order to become his wife!

But he did not want her!

She knew the man she loved was away, and guessed he would not be back for a week or two. Old Mr. Dures, whom he was visiting, was still quite ill.

A sudden determination came to her. She would make a last attempt to win him!

She entered a phone booth and called up a friend, speaking eagerly on the telephone for a few minutes. When she came out she was smiling, and she hailed a taxi immediately.

She had learned the whereabouts of the real Maude Vyner, and something else as well.

She had learned that Maud Vyner wished for a divorce from her husband, but he refused to give it her. Mrs. Vyner would be delighted to know of the existence of the girl who had taken her identity for one night!

Doria Lindley entered the lobby of the Regency Hotel in Brussels and looked about her eagerly. She had had only one idea in her mind when she had left New York—to find Desmond Lorrimer and to blacken Pamela's name in his eyes.

Luck had helped her. Mr. Dures was dead and was being buried that day in the little cemetery on the hill. Desmond Lorrimer would be back any moment from the funeral and would need comforting.

While she waited for him Doria's thoughts went back over the past. Maud Vyner had proved a kindred spirit, listening to her story, and then remarking:

"With your evidence I can easily get a divorce from Rafe. Your precious Pamela Thornton will find she'll be unable to clear her name. Why, he has played right into my hands!"

Doria smiled at the remembrance. From the depths of her heart she wanted Pamela to suffer, because she had won Desmond Lorrimer's love.

Suddenly the door opened and the man of whom she had been thinking came into the lobby. With a well-affected start of surprise Doria went toward him with outstretched hands.

"Desmond! What a surprise! I never thought of seeing you here!" she exclaimed. "I'm on my way home," she added. "When do you go back?"

"By the morning boat," he answered.

Doria exercised every charm of which she was capable during the next few hours and it was not until the next day that she prepared to sow the seeds of suspicion in his mind.

"I really meant to spend the summer abroad," she told him, "but Maud Vyner wants me to visit her. She's one of my oldest friends, you know."

"Yes?" Her companion did not sound interested, but she forced herself to go on.

"She's divorcing her husband," she said. "I feel so sorry. She is broken-hearted. Maud is in love with him still, but for months he has been going out with another girl, who has even gone to the length of openly calling herself by his wife's name. Of course he is not defending the case. He can't. As for the girl—Pamela Thornton—" She stopped at the look in his eyes.

"Pamela Thornton!"

Desmond Lorrimer's face was very white. Surely it could not be! The Pamela Thornton he knew was all that was good and sweet. They were engaged to be married.

"Do you know any one by that name?" she asked, continuing: "This Pamela Thornton works as a manikin at Madame Fleurette's. She has been there for over a year, and it is she who has been going about with Rafe Vyner, posing as his wife!"

She dared not say more, but turned away casually.

Desmond Lorrimer was looking away into the distance, anger in his heart, a rising fury against the girl he loved.

As Doria had been speaking, he remembered that he had seen Pamela before, although she had denied it.

The girl he loved was the woman he had first seen outside his own apart-



ment, who had asked him where Rafe Vyner lived!

Desmond Lorrimer had not written to tell Pamela he was returning to New York. Mr. Dures had died suddenly, and he had not had time to make any plans. But now he was glad.

She had lied to him, had sworn they had never met, yet it was he who had directed her to Rafe Vyner's apartment! Why had he not remembered from the first?

An agony took possession of him. If only he did not love her so much!

He came to a decision. He would let Pamela defend herself—he loved her too much to condemn her without giving her a chance to explain. He would take her by surprise. It was just as well that he had not written.

Doria Lindley was well pleased with her work. She saw the tragedy in his face, and thought she had killed his love for the other girl.

Arriving in New York a week later he put Doria into a taxi.

"Come and see me to-night, Desmond," she urged, and as she raised her eyes to his he saw that they were full of sympathy. He smiled at her and agreed, feeling grateful and somehow comforted.

After going to his apartment he went immediately to Pamela's rooming house.

"Miss Thornton?" said the landlady who answered the door to him. "She is upstairs. Out of work, I'm afraid. She has not been to business for three days. You had better go up to her."

He found he was trembling when he knocked at her door. Never in his life had he wanted her as he did now—to hold her in his arms, to feel her soft lips



*Then he saw the girl he loved lying back in a chair, turned away from the door, asleep, and he knew she was sleeping from exhaustion.*

on his, to look into the depths of her eyes.

That story of Doria's could not be true.

He knocked twice, but there was no answer, and he opened the door hesitantly and went in.

He looked around and saw that the room was empty. Only the jade-and-gold dress gleamed from the closet, the door of which was open wide. And on a chair was flung a blue coat and skirt.

It was the suit worn by the girl who had asked him to direct her to Rafe Vyner's apartment!

So Pamela had lied after all!

Then he saw the girl he loved lying back in a chair, turned away from the door, asleep, and he knew she was sleeping from exhaustion. Her face was white, her mouth drooping.

"Pamela," he said. Then his voice died away as he saw a piece of paper on her lap on which was inscribed:

Two hundred dollars inclosed with all my thanks.  
RAFE VYNER.

Two hundred dollars! She had taken money from that other man!

He glanced at a letter in her hand and read it with anger gathering in his eyes.

It was from a firm of lawyers, naming her as correspondent in Maud Vyner's divorce case!

Doria had not lied. All the proof he needed and more, was here, before him.

The Lorrimer sapphire shining on her finger seemed to be mocking him. Their engagement ring, and Pamela was false! She had been false from the beginning. He stooped down and slipped his ring off her finger, putting it in his pocket.

Then he went swiftly out of the room, leaving his card on the table, the only sign of his visit to the girl whom, in spite of her treachery, he knew he still loved!

Pamela opened her eyes and moved stiffly. She seemed to have been asleep for a very long time.

She rose and walked over to the table, and as she did so she saw Desmond Lorrimer's card on the table.

At the same moment she looked down at her left hand. Her ring had gone! The man she loved had seen the lawyer's letter and had misunderstood.

Fear clutched her heart now. If only she had told him of her escapade! When she had received the lawyer's letter she knew that the net was closing around her, that it would be almost impossible to clear her name.

She had counted on the help of the man she loved. She had needed it, and instead he had taken his ring—and left her!

Day followed day and with each twenty-four hours that passed her loneliness grew.

She had no one to whom to turn for sympathy—she was entirely alone.

Madame had dismissed her, for she would allow no scandal to touch her girls, and already Pamela's money was getting low. Only the jade-and-gold dress remained to remind her of dreams which had never come true.

All of her letters to the man who believed her false had remained unanswered. Although she had begged him to see her, to let her explain, he had remained deaf to her pleadings.

Rafe Vyner was abroad, his address unknown, so that she could not appeal to him for help, and yet he was responsible for her present position. She had no chance of defending herself, for the case was to be undefended.

The night before the day of hearing, Pamela was sitting listlessly in her room, trying not to think that only twenty-five dollars remained of her money.

It seemed unlikely that she would ever get work again, for madame had refused to give her a reference.

As a knock came at her door, her landlady entered.

"A gentleman to see you," she announced. "It is urgent. He is in the sitting room."

For one moment new hope entered Pamela's heart. Was it Desmond Lorrimer?

She ran downstairs, her eyes glowing, joy at her heart, but as she stood on the threshold of the sitting room, she stopped and stared before her.

It was not the man she loved who was waiting for her, but Rafe Vyner, who was responsible for all her troubles!

He held out his hand.

"Miss Thornton, I am sorry," he said earnestly. "I raced home as soon as I heard. It is terrible to think you should have been drawn into this affair. But I've come back in time, and I have all the evidence I need now. You need not be afraid. Your name will not be mentioned to-morrow."

So she had misunderstood all the time. This man had not meant her to suffer! Once his words would have sent a tide of relief coursing through her, but now the prospect of her innocence being established did not seem to matter very much.

"Thank you," she said listlessly.

Rafe Vyner had come to her rescue too late. She had lost her work and spent her savings, and even the man she loved had failed her.

Gradually she told her story, and the man's face hardened as he listened.

From the beginning his wife had been vindictive and treacherous, yet he had tried to believe in her. He meant to defend the case and with evidence he had gathered, divorce her. He had told his uncle everything, and to his surprise the other had taken his part.

When the divorce was final he was returning to England.

"You must let me do something," he urged, "let me compensate you for all that has happened."

"No one can compensate me," she said, and acting on her desire for some one in whom to confide, she told him a little of her engagement which had ended so unhappily.

He took her hand in a warm clasp as he said:

"I can't forgive myself. But perhaps I shall be able to help you. I will come to see you again."

"Pamela!"

The name spoken in a well-remem-

bered voice seemed to catch at Pamela's heart, and she turned around, her face white, to confront Desmond Lorrimer, who was standing, bareheaded, his hat in his hand, his eyes fixed pleadingly on her face.

They were outside the door of her rooming house, for she was just returning from a walk.

"Rafe Vyner has been to see me. He has told me everything. I was just about to call on you," he said.

A little light flashed into her eyes, and without speaking she motioned him to follow her into the house, and the next moment they were facing each other in the sitting room where he had pleaded with her once before.

"I've come to say I'm sorry," he murmured. "I shall never forgive myself. I can't expect you to trust me again. I failed you when you needed me most, and that is the unforgivable sin—in love!"

There followed a silence in which Pamela's heart seemed to fill the room with its thudding beat.

"No sin is unforgivable when one loves," she whispered at last, and seeing the misery in his eyes, she held out her arms to him.

With a glad cry he drew her into his arms and held her close against his heart.

"Can you—do you really mean it?" he asked and went on: "I'll spend my life in making you happy."

"You will do that if you spend your life in loving me," she corrected him, and could say no more, for his lips met hers and in that divine moment she knew her joy was complete.

Doria Lindley, Maud Vyner, all her bitter memories faded away in the knowledge that all the misunderstandings were over, and he had come back to her, knowing he should never have gone away.



# The Good Little Sport

By Jannet M. Walters

AS she wrapped up the purchase for the man in a brown suit, Neil Hope wondered if she would ever feel cool again. Her brown hair lay damply against her forehead. Her weariness had ceased to be a dull, tired ache and had become a sharp stabbing in her back, a pounding in her head, and little shooting pains in her eyes. Without warning, the heat wave had descended, and turned New York City into a sweltering hole of inescapable discomfort.

Automatically Neil snipped off the string, and handed the package to the man with his change. She forced a smile to her pale lips, and then drooped wearily against the counter.

The establishment of John & Thomas Lang—books, pictures, and gifts—was crowded and noisy. For a moment, customers, books, and counters swirled away into a sea of blackness, and Neil had a sensation of falling swiftly through space. Then a voice recalled her to reality.

With an effort she opened her eyes to see a tall, good-looking young man in a light-gray suit standing in front of her. His hair was so very black that it seemed aggressively proud of being black, and his eyes were so deeply blue that at first glance they seemed to match his hair. When he smiled at her, his teeth sparkled whitely under his crisp

black mustache. She managed a faint smile in return.

"Do you know," he was saying in a voice that was deep and vibrant, "that you've hummed that snatch of song forty-three times in the last half hour? I've counted!"

Neil stared at him. There was a glint of amusement in his eyes, but beyond it there was a fiery quality that made her feel vaguely uneasy.

"Do you know what that indicates?" he demanded.

Neil's laugh was rather nervous. "Don't tell me it indicates a job in the talkies!"

"No; I happen to be a doctor. And you're not well." His dark, almost smoldering eyes held her, and in spite of the curt, impersonal words, the expression in their blue depths brought a faint flush to her cheeks. "Have you seen a physician lately?"

Neil shook her head. "There's nothing wrong with me. I'm just tired."

She knew that she didn't look well. Her brown hair waved as softly as it always had, but her face and body were thin; her gray eyes had no luster, and there were faint violet pencilings beneath them. But she wasn't ill. She was just horribly tired.

The man with the black hair drew a cigarette from his pocket and lighted it. "How long do you work here?" he asked briskly.

"From seven to eleven—in the evenings."

"Work during the day, too?"

"Yes."

He looked at her steadily, the smoke from his cigarette curling up about his head. "Do you mind if I ask you some questions?"

Neil smiled. "I love questions. But I'm all right. All I need is a little rest in the country."

"A good deal of rest," the man said lightly. "How much sleep do you get?"

"Oh—about seven hours."

"Sleep well?"

"Not so very. I'm usually so tired I can't."

"I thought so. Irritable? Low-spirited? Headache? Eyes bother you?"

She nodded to all his questions, then softly laughed. "Does that prove that I have parrot fever or something just as bad? It only proves to me that I'm tired."

"It proves to me," he said with his dark eyes fixed on her face, "that if you don't get some rest you're going to crash."

Neil's smile faded. "It can't be as bad as that," she said quickly.

"You've lost weight, haven't you? Let me look at your eyes."

His long fingers touched her cheeks gently, and there was something electric in the contact that made her acutely conscious of his nearness. She drew back in alarm.

"Anæmic," he said, and she had to look at him. She couldn't keep her eyes from his. "Ever attracted by the idea of suicide?"

"Why——" Neil began, startled, and then paused. Her cheeks grew very red. "Isn't everybody—at times?"

He said calmly: "Everybody in your condition is. What do you do in the daytime?"

"I'm a telephone operator for the Lock & Williams Paint Co."

He nodded his dark head. "Nervous, exacting work, isn't it? I've seen those girls working. Supporting your family, I suppose."

"Only my mother," said Neil, and decided to answer no more questions. Her face became slightly set. What right had a strange man, even a doctor——

"I'm not trying to pry into your affairs," the young doctor picked up her thoughts. "I really want to warn you. You're in a critical condition. My ad-

vice is to give up both these jobs for a while and get some rest. And here —" He drew a small pad from his pocket, scribbled on it, and handed her the sheet. "Get this prescription filled. It's a tonic. It'll correct that anæmic condition and make you feel better."

He dismissed the entire conversation with a gesture, and asked for a book on surgery.

"We haven't it," Neil said. "Shall I order it?"

He nodded. Neil drew the pad of order blanks toward her.

"Doctor Bruce Ripley." She could feel his eyes on her as she wrote down his name and filled out the order blank, and her hand shook a little. When she had finished and looked up he spoke to her very deliberately, with a curious warmth. "You know," he said, "I like you. You're awfully pretty, but that isn't the reason. I like you because you're such a good little sport."

And with mixed feelings of alarm and pleasurable excitement, Neil watched the departure of his broad shoulders. She turned to see Mrs. Lascher, a red-haired young woman who had been buying books from Neil for the past year.

"How much do you suppose that advice would cost you if you went to his office?" Mrs. Lascher demanded.

Neil was surprised. "Why?"

"That was Doctor Bruce Ripley!"

But Neil's face did not reflect the expected astonishment.

"Am I supposed to give three cheers and wave a flag when Doctor Ripley's name is mentioned?"

"Well, he's supposed to be one of the greatest surgeons in New York. He's reached the point where he charges according to your income."

"Then I," Neil laughed, "owe him thirty cents. He looks awfully young to be so famous."

When the store finally closed, and she was out on the hot sidewalk, she

thought back over her conversation with Doctor Bruce Ripley. And when she boarded the cross-town car, she sat in a sort of daze, picturing him in her mind until the car reached St. Nicholas Avenue. She was still thinking of him when she got out and started slowly north, past the arcade, where the warm, dusty breath of the subway swept out and enveloped her for a second, past the store redolent of peanuts and freshly roasted coffee, past all the familiar shops. She turned into a dingy apartment house on One Hundred and Eighty-fourth Street.

The tiled vestibule was dirty, the air heavy with mixed odors of cabbage, onions, and fish.

Mechanically Neil peered through the slit of the empty letter box, and then went wearily up the stairs. When she entered on the fourth floor the tiny cubicle which they called the hall, a thin, querulous voice came from the living room.

"Is that you, Neil?"

"Yes, mother."

Two years before, just after her father had died, Neil had called in Doctor Mason for her mother. It was her heart, he said—pericarditis. Mrs. Hope must stay in a wheel chair; any exercise or movement might prove fatal. Fatal! It was a horrid, ugly word. And then after he had gone, her mother had cried weak, frightened tears. "Neil, you'll never leave me, will you? Never marry and leave me? Promise, Neil!"

And Neil had promised. She kept the promise—would have kept it even if her mother had not continually reminded her of it with that little note of power that was so hard to ignore and be generous about. There had been men Neil might have married, men with whom she knew she could have been happy. It hadn't been so very hard to send them away, but that, she thought, was because she hadn't really been in



love with any of them. But suppose she should fall in love with some one?

And it had been hard on her mother. She had been a buyer for the millinery department of Westover & Obrigon, Fifth Avenue, receiving a salary of

lipped mouth was compressed with bitterness; her cheeks were pink, and her pale eyes restless and wintry. She looked up at Neil and sighed.

"Well," she said, "I feel as well as can be expected." Her mouth tightened.



*His dark, almost smoldering eyes held her, and in spite of the impersonal words, the expression in their blue depths brought a faint flush to her cheeks.*

eighty-five dollars a week, and she loved her work. It seemed to Neil that the company might have helped a little with the expenses of her mother's illness, but all they did was write constantly asking her to come back.

She walked into the room. "Hello, mother, how do you feel?"

A small, fluffy woman in her early forties sat in a wheel chair beside a table lamp. Her small, fine hands, which age had ignored, were folded on an opened book in her lap. Her thin-

"I do wish you could work at something that wouldn't keep you out so late. It gets so lonesome here. You're young, and you don't realize how hard it is to be ill and be alone all day." She sighed again.

"It must be awful, mother, but we need the money so badly. Now that Doctor Mason is giving you special treatments——"

"Oh, I know what a nuisance I am, Neil."

"Mother, please——"

"Oh, I know I'm a terrible drag on you. But it's hard being in my condition. You don't know how hard it is."

Neil felt as though she would scream if the thin, self-pitying voice went on for another second, and that frightened her. She must be ill when everything irritated her so easily.

"Here, mother," she said, handing her the package she had brought home.

Mrs. Hope undid the wrappings, opened the cardboard box, and drew out a very small bunch of very small violets. "Oh," she said, "they're very pretty, aren't they? I suppose it's difficult to get the large ones these days, isn't it? Do you mind putting them over on the other table? That earthy odor makes me feel squeamish."

A little later Neil tossed in the hot bed and tried to make her mind a blank. She wondered why it was so difficult to sleep when she was utterly exhausted.

And then, like a picture against a black-velvet background, the face of Doctor Bruce Ripley appeared. She considered it calmly for a moment, and then that strange, electric thrill ran through her. She saw the striking darkness of his hair, and the firmness of his lips. The memory of his white teeth flashing in a smile fascinated her. His eyes, dark blue, almost black, gazed at her with that glint of fire in their depths that made her feel strangely weak, vaguely frightened.

She tried to reason it out. What was there about his eyes? Why did the memory of his broad, straight shoulders bring that curious warmth to her? What was there about the man that was so magnetic?

Why couldn't she stop thinking of him when she knew that she must never be interested in any man?

She lay and tossed until daybreak, thinking of Doctor Bruce Ripley until the milk wagons had ceased to rattle through the streets. She recalled every gesture of his long hands, every detail

of their conversation, every inflection of his deep voice, and his words at parting: "I like you because you're such a good little sport." At dawn, exhausted in mind and body, she fell asleep and dreamed of him.

In the two days that followed she thought of him almost constantly. In the bookstore she was absent-minded and nervous. Suppose she shouldn't be there when he came? Suppose she never saw him again?

At night she thought about him, thought and thought until her head was spinning. Telling herself that she was a silly little fool did no good. She couldn't, simply couldn't think about any man like that. And yet she continued to do so.

Two nights later she looked up from the book counter and saw Doctor Bruce Ripley walking toward her.

"So you're still here," said the famous young surgeon.

Neil could feel the color mounting in her cheeks as her eyes met his.

He drew a cigarette from his pocket and began tapping it on the back of his hand. She watched his hands—long, brown, strong hands with rectangular finger nails. The deft movements of them fascinated her. And they were puzzling hands. They were full of contradictions—strength against gentleness, deliberation against impatience.

She looked up. "I couldn't quit."

The black-haired young man tapped the cigarette impatiently. "You can't afford to go on plugging like this."

Neil, wrapping his book, answered: "I can't afford not to." She smiled. "At any rate, my morale is good."

The intentness of his dark eyes forced her to look at him. "What you need," he said, "is less morale and more rest. You're such a little thing—I hate to see you working yourself to death like this. What time are you through here?"

"Nine to-night, on account of the heat. We're closing early."

Doctor Ripley's face looked as though he had just thought of something pleasant. "My car's outside," he said. "I'm going to take you for a little drive. All right?"

She hesitated. Then: "I'd love to go."

At nine o'clock Neil powdered her nose, adjusted her hat very carefully over her brown hair, frowned at the faint smudges of shadow under her smoky eyes, and went out to meet Doctor Bruce Ripley. He was pacing up and down the hot sidewalk with a cigarette smoldering between his fingers.

As he helped her into the slimmest roadster she had ever seen, his hand lingered for a moment against her arm, and his blue eyes looked darker than ever.

Neil tilted her face up to the first breeze she had known in a week. It was queer, she thought, the way everything had a dreamlike quality to-night. First, one of New York's foremost surgeons was taking her driving with him—that wasn't real. And then there was the sleek, slender car, like a lioness moving swiftly on padded feet.

She had made inquiries, had found that Doctor Ripley was just thirty, and was looked upon by his profession as a surgical genius. What interest could such a good-looking, brilliant young man have in a girl who operated a telephone switchboard by day and sold books in a Bronx store at night?

She glanced up at his profile as his capable hand whisked the gear shift about. Neil leaned back and took deep breaths and decided not to think. It was nice enough to be there, nice enough just to have delicious sensations without thinking bothersome thoughts.

A green jewel gleamed above them in the street, and the lioness raced on. Then a baleful red eye flashed out of the darkness, and the roadster halted.

When at last they were out of the traffic Doctor Bruce Ripley talked. He

mentioned amusing incidents in the operating room. Could there be, she wondered, any more romantic setting than a white, tensely expectant operating room for a man as impressively good looking as Doctor Ripley? She imagined the deference, the respect and admiration he must command from the other doctors.

"He's really a dear," she thought, not knowing that her opinion of him would be considered a gross understatement of fact by approximately fifty graduate and student nurses in his hospital.

After a while she stopped listening to his words, and just heard his voice flowing on. Once when she pulled the electric lighter from the dashboard and held it for him while he lighted a cigarette, his hand closed around hers, held it firmly for seconds after the cigarette was glowing. And once he stopped the car suddenly and turned to face her.

"Did any one ever tell you," he said, "that you have the smokiest, prettiest eyes in the world?"

"No!" she laughed.

"Well, you have. You're an awfully sweet person. And you're a good little sport."

She smiled at him. "I like you," she said.

And just as suddenly as he had stopped the car he turned away from her and drove on.

When they stopped before her apartment house, Doctor Ripley walked with her to the steps. She thanked him. Rather seriously they shook hands and said good night. She watched the roadster go. Somehow, she knew she would see him again.

She felt oddly buoyant. She was just as tired as she was every other night when she came home and climbed to the fourth floor, but with a difference; it was just her body now; her spirit wasn't weary. It was positively glowing.

She shook her head briskly as though

to free herself of a troublesome mosquito of a thought. She mustn't fall in love with Doctor Ripley, or with any one. And yet—it wouldn't be hard to love him, and it would be very wonderful to be married to a man like that. He was considerate, and kind, and—  
She shook her head again.

The next night, because of the persistent heat, Messrs. Lang again decided to close the store at nine and give their employees a chance to rest.

Neil left the bookstore rather jauntily, humming to herself—and stopped short as she saw the tawny roadster at the curb. Doctor Ripley was lounging against it. He hastened over to her. His teeth sparkled beneath his crisp black mustache. He took her hand very tightly in his.

"I couldn't stay away. I had to come back. I couldn't keep you out of my mind all day."

"What an uninteresting day it must have been!" Neil laughed.

"Ten operations—none of them very interesting. All the time I was operating I was thinking about you. I really believe I'm falling in love with you."

"You sound so resentful!" Neil said, laughing.

He smiled. "I've been thinking of you, keeping your chin up and laughing. You're such a good little sport!" He gave her hand a final squeeze. "I'm going to drive you out of the city so you can breathe something besides carbon monoxide. Hop in."

They drove and talked. They laughed and were serious, and sometimes, but not often, they were silent. Neil learned about his life in the hospital, and his theories, and his ambitions, and his dream of going to Vienna to study. She listened to his deep, vibrant voice, and cherished the moments when his eyes met hers and his hand brushed her fingers.

When they parted that night she knew that he almost kissed her, and she was frightened. Where was she drifting?

She was half undressed when her mother called.

Neil tumbled down from the clouds! "Yes, darling."

"Where have you been?"

"Driving with Doctor Ripley."

The thin, querulous voice said: "Doctor Mason was here to-night. He doesn't approve of your going out with Doctor Ripley any more than I do."

"But I like him."

"Come here, Neil."

The discussion became an argument, and lasted well over an hour. Mrs. Hope was suspicious of Doctor Ripley's motives. She quoted Doctor Mason at some length. But behind her reasoning, Neil heard the voices of pride and fear. The old fear of Neil's marrying, slipping away from her, was an obsession to Mrs. Hope. She was afraid that if Neil married a rich man she would be sent away to some sanitarium. She had mentioned it before. She dwelt on it now.

The discussion ended with Neil's promising once again never to marry. But she would not promise to stop seeing Doctor Ripley.

And as July ended and August began, Neil and the surgeon were together almost every evening. Sometimes, on Sundays, they went driving into the country. Doctor Ripley knew of cozy little places where they could stop and get fat sandwiches and cups of delicious thick cocoa. It was in one of these tea rooms that he asked her to stop calling him "Doctor Ripley."

"I hear it all day long in the hospital. From now on I'm 'Bruce' to you, Neil. A good homely name—'Bruce.'"

"Like 'Abraham Lincoln,'" she laughed.

She loved the tender note in his voice when he said: "Neil." He gave the



name a significance it had never had before.

And Neil worried more and more. That promise to her mother was never out of her mind. There was no escaping it: she loved the black-haired surgeon, loved him, and missed him, and thought of him constantly. And she could no more stop loving him than she could break the promise to her mother. What she should do and what she could do was give him up. But that she couldn't do.

Her mother's questions about Bruce had lately become more insistent, more querulous. The one night Neil had taken him up to meet her mother had been distressing. There had been a long, exhausting scene after he had left. Since then her mother had talked about him constantly, and her questions were all about their friendship. How far had it gone? How serious was it? And behind all her questions was that ob-

*Neil shook her head again.  
"I can't do it, Bruce. You  
must understand!"*

session: marriage to a rich man for Neil—a sanitarium for herself!

Neil knew that something was going to happen. She knew that Doctor Ripley had never been an impersonal stranger from the very first moment he had spoken to her. She was certain that he loved her as deeply as she loved him, and for weeks she had sensed that he was about to tell her. And sometimes she went weak with anticipation.

One night they drove out to a Long Island beach club. The night was a perfect one for driving. There was a big red moon in an almost starless sky, and the air was warm and languid. When they got out of the car the beauty of the Sound smoothed the lines of anxiety from Neil's face. The water was a velvet, mysterious black, and where it met the beach little phosphorescent waves whispered. Groups of lights far out in the darkness were ships moving steadily in the steamer lane.

Here and there on the Connecticut shore a lighthouse winked.

On the veranda of the clubhouse an orchestra was softly playing.

They stood at the edge of the water, Bruce tall and romantic, his hair as black as the water at their feet. Neil inhaled the sweet sea air and wanted to laugh, it was so heavenly.

She knew when he turned and took her hands that the inevitable moment had come. She looked up at him gravely, a little fearfully. The yearning in his eyes made her feel tremulous.

"Neil darling," he said with his eager voice husky, "you know what I want to say. I love you, Neil. I've been crazy about you since the first time I saw

you." He lifted her hands and kissed their palms. "You're such a little darling. Do you know how I feel? I want to take you away from New York, away from hardship, long hours, subways, book counters. I want to give you a lovely home, a car, clothes, a yacht, trips abroad—give you the things you deserve!"

He laid a kiss in the palm of her left hand, curled her fingers over it. "You're such a dear little sport, Neil. It's hurt me to see you working yourself to death. I want to do big things for you—tip over mountains and ladle out oceans! Darling, we'll go to Vienna—a honeymoon in Vienna, Neil! The things we'll do! Sweetheart, don't you want me to feel that way?"

Neil looked at him with her eyes misted. He was saying everything she had always wanted him to say, everything she had been afraid he would say. And the happiness that swept over her was like a stabbing pain. She wanted to hold out her arms and tell him how deeply she cared for him, but she did not.

He was putting his arms around her, drawing her close to him. Neil's heart was hammering. She pushed him away, backed away from him. She brushed the hair up from her forehead with a jerky gesture. She was trembling.

"Neil—dearest!" He took a step toward her.

She flung out both arms against him. "Don't!" she cried. "I can't."

He caught her hands tightly. "Neil!" His voice was almost savage. "Don't you love me, Neil? Don't you want to marry me?"

She shook her head violently. "I can't love you—"

His hands were crushing hers. "What is it, darling?"

Neil said miserably: "You know. I can't leave mother. I promised."

"Neil, we'll take her with us."

"No! No!"

"Darling, we will. I won't give you up. I love you! I adore you!"

"I couldn't have her living with us! I couldn't! I want to be alone with you! Don't you understand?"

"I understand that nothing's going to spoil our happiness," he said harshly.

Neil shook her head again. Why did this horror have to go on? Why must she say these things when she wanted him so much, when he meant everything to her? "I can't do it, Bruce. You must understand!"

They stood facing each other, oblivious of everything around them, Bruce's eyes fierce, Neil's lips quivering and her body weak.

"Neil, if you don't want her with us we'll make other arrangements."

"You can't do anything. I won't leave her! I promised! Oh, don't you see?"

"We'll have a companion for her—fix up an apartment," he said decisively. "That solves everything."

Neil twisted her hands together, bit at her lip. She loved him, and she wanted him so!

She looked at him, so tall and utterly adorable. "I won't, Bruce. It's my job and I'll stick to it."

He seemed bewildered. "But, darling, I'm making it my job. I'm going to marry you. We're going to Vienna."

Neil fought back the tears that were stinging in her eyes.

"Bruce, please try to understand!" Her hands pushed her hair back distractedly. "And please don't look at me like that. You can't make me forsake mother! Don't you see? I'm all she has, and I won't leave her alone." Her voice was growing hysterical. Her left hand was at her throat, holding it tightly. "I won't have you support her. I won't push it off on any one else. And I won't take her with us. No, I tell you!" She ground one heel into the sand. "Let me alone! Please please let me alone!"

She pressed the palms of her hands to her temples. How could she go on saying these things to him when she wanted so terribly to have his arms around her, to feel his lips on hers, to be sheltered and protected and loved?

His arms were rigid at his sides. Huskily he said: "Neil, you're not arguing with your head. You're just being emotional."

Her voice rose hysterically. "I don't care. I can't help it. I won't marry you! Now please take me home!"

He swept her into his arms and crushed her against him. Neil remained rigid, unresponsive.

"Dearest," he said thickly, his lips on her hair, "doesn't it mean anything to you that I love you so?"

She pushed him away. Her smoky eyes, with pain like a flame in the depths of them, met his.

"I'm sorry, Bruce," she said wearily, tears in her voice.

They walked silently to the car, silently drove back to the city. When they reached the apartment house he helped her out and they walked upstairs, wordlessly, leadenly. At the apartment door Neil turned and faced him. His black hair was rumpled. His dark eyes were deeply hurt.

She held out her hand to him.

"Good-by," she said.

For a long time he looked at her. He didn't take her hand. Turning, he went slowly down the stairs.

Neil listened to his footsteps, going down, away from her, out of her life. Step by step, slowly they went down. She would never see him again, the man she loved more than she had thought she could ever love any one. He meant living, and loving, and care and consideration. He stood for happiness, everything she wanted. She loved him, and he was going away. She was sending him away!

With Bruce gone, what was left to her? Work, hard work. For what?

Somehow Neil got to her own room. She stood in the darkness, throbbing with a burning, consuming pain. And still she could hear his footsteps on the stairs, fainter and fainter, going away from her.

She took a step forward, held out her arms, opened her lips. Then slowly she seemed to sag. Her arms fell limply to her sides, her head drooped, and she swayed against the wall. Bruce was gone, and Neil suddenly saw the years stretching before her like a dim, empty corridor, lonely and cold and dismal.

From her mother's room came the whining, querulous voice: "Is that you, Neil?"

Neil straightened, stiffened. Her shaking hands went over her ears. She threw her head back and closed her teeth on her lower lip. Her face contracted until her long brows almost met. Her breath came pantingly.

Slowly her head came down, her face smoothed, and she drew a long, shuddering breath.

"Yes, mother!" said the good little sport.

The next day was the hottest of the summer. Neil, crushed into a subway, wondered how she could survive the day, wondered later, as she sat operating the switchboard, if the intolerable aching in her heart would go on forever.

Her hands were weak and limp, and they trembled. She had hardly the strength to lift the plugs on the board. Her smoke-gray eyes had the look of a person whose spirit is dead. The shadows under them were dark and clearly defined.

She was a whirl of hurt, bruised, hopeless feelings. She prepared supper that evening without realizing what she was doing, and ate with her mother, unaware that she was eating. Once she got up slowly from the table, took the bottle of tonic that Bruce had given



her, and put it away in a drawer of the sideboard.

Her mother went on and on in her high voice, listing complaints. Neil listened with a sympathetic smile, offering the expected comments at the proper times, and wondering how one could exist without hope, live with nothing to live for.

"Doctor Mason will be here to-night, Neil. He's going to come oftener. He's so considerate and understanding."

"Yes, mother." What was she, now that Bruce was gone? She had ceased to be Neil Hope. She had become an emotion whose only function was to be painful to itself.

The doorbell rang sharply.

Mrs. Hope patted her hair. "Wheel me into the living room, Neil. Do I look all right?"

"You're lovely, darling."

Neil established her mother in the living room, went to the hall, and opened the door.

"Bruce!" she whispered.

Neil swayed weakly in the doorway, and her hand went to her heart. Then somehow she got herself under control.

The old familiar flame was in his eyes. "Neil, I can't let you go," he said passionately. "I can't. I thought I'd go mad to-day. I couldn't work. I've come up here to see your mother."

"Oh, why?"

He said crisply: "I'm going to have a look at that heart."

Neil clutched his arm. "Bruce, you can't do anything like that!"

His long, bronzed hand detached hers from his sleeve. "I'm going in, Neil."

She stood between him and the door that led into the living room. "You can't go in!"

He looked at her steadily. "Neil," he said, "I'm going in."

For a moment she returned the look, then with a sigh of weariness she stepped aside. The surgeon strode past her and over to the wheel chair.

"Good evening, Mrs. Hope," he said briskly. "I want to listen to that heart of yours."

Mrs. Hope looked distressed. It was clear that she didn't know quite how to treat this grim young man. She was beginning to murmur a protest when he placed a stethoscope over her heart.

"Breathe naturally."

"But——" Neil's mother began.

"Don't talk."

Neil stood miserably watching. It hurt so to see his hands and his hair and his dark eyes and hear his deep voice, knowing they would be gone so soon from her—forever.

She was startled by a wheezing voice at the open door.

"Good evening, Miss Hope!"

"Oh, Doctor Mason," she said dully, and knew that there would be trouble. But suddenly she didn't care.

Doctor Mason, a tall, gaunt man with an untidy mustache, was staring with astonishment at the kneeling surgeon.

"Well!" he said explosively. He moved toward the wheel chair. "You are consulting another physician, Mrs. Hope?"

"No!" Mrs. Hope wailed.

"You're not to talk," Doctor Ripley's voice reminded her.

"At whose request are you examining my patient, doctor?" the gaunt Doctor Mason angrily inquired.

Doctor Ripley said: "Silence, please."

Doctor Mason's face became red. "Miss Hope," he said blusteringly "who is this man?"

Neil, her eyes on Bruce, answered absently: "It's Doctor Ripley."

"Ripley!" the gaunt man barked. He took a deep breath. His badly fitting suit seemed to settle about his long figure as his shoulders slouched. One large hand went up to his ragged mustache and tugged at it gingerly. "Doctor Bruce Ripley?"

Neil nodded.

"Well," wheezed Doctor Mason. "Well!" He turned eagerly as the man with the stethoscope rose to his feet. "Doctor Ripley? How do you do, sir?"

Doctor Ripley nodded curtly. "Doctor Mason? I'm very much interested in Mrs. Hope's heart action."

"Oh—er—yes, I see."

Bruce carefully drew a cigarette from a package. Neil saw that his hands were not quite steady. She searched his face anxiously. It was white. He looked strange. That meant trouble.

His voice was level as he spoke to Doctor Mason. "Doctor, I understand that you diagnosed this case as pericarditis. Is that right?"

"Quite right," said the gaunt man, eying him.

"It's odd, doctor," the man with the black hair went on, lighting the cigarette carefully, "but I can't find a trace." He puffed. "Not a trace." He held out the stethoscope. "Here. I can't seem to detect the slightest pericardial friction murmur."

Neil glanced quickly from one doctor to the other. Mrs. Hope looked bewildered.

Doctor Mason knelt beside the wheel chair and adjusted the stethoscope. Bruce watched him closely.

Doctor Mason straightened with an odd expression in his face. He glanced at the other man, and glanced away. His red, raw-looking hand went to his mustache.

"Peculiar," he said. "Remarkable."

"Perhaps you made your last examination several months ago," Bruce suggested.

Doctor Mason was nervously worrying his untidy mustache. "Yes. That's so——" he said hastily.

Neil's mother cried shrilly: "Why, Doctor Mason! You examined me



"Good evening, Mrs. Hope," he said briskly. "I want to listen to that heart of yours."

three days ago! And you said my heart was still bad!"

Doctor Ripley glanced at her as he crushed out his cigarette. "I'll attend to this, Mrs. Hope." He turned to the other doctor, and Neil was frightened at the stern expression on his white face. His eyes were narrowed, and she could see the muscles of his jaw ripple as they tightened. There was an ugly look about his mouth, and his hands were clenched.

The hands of the other doctor twitched nervously. He had contrived to get himself closer to the door.

"Doctor Mason," Bruce said in a repressed voice, "I want you to be out of New York by to-morrow. You've stopped practicing medicine in this city. Understand?" His hands clenched and opened, then tightened again. He took a step toward Doctor Mason. The gaunt man backed toward the door. His face was a dead-white.

"You cad! You've kept this woman in a wheel chair for two years! A healthy woman! You've made this girl work day and night to pay your crooked bills! You've ruined her health! You've driven her almost into a nervous breakdown! Now get out of here! Get out of New York! Get out!"

Doctor Mason slid through the door Bruce held open for him. It slammed, but they could hear the other doctor's agitated feet pounding hurriedly down the stairs.

For a moment there was a tense silence. Mrs. Hope's shrill voice broke it.

"I don't believe it!"

Doctor Ripley strode over to Neil. He looked at her mother. "Mrs. Hope, you have a perfectly healthy, normal heart. From the action of your heart it's evident that you once had pericarditis, but the condition cleared up in a short time. Complete rest did that. For a year at least your heart has been sound. You can scrap that wheel chair

and go back to work to-morrow. That crook has been robbing you."

He turned to Neil. "And when I think what he's done to you I could kill him!"

"I don't believe it!" Neil's mother repeated shrilly.

"Come down to my office to-morrow," he said crisply. "Be there at eleven sharp. I'll have the two best heart specialists in the city to examine you. They'll say what I say. Your heart is sound."

He looked at Neil and slowly smiled. The strain was gone from his face. The warm color had returned. His eyes were glowing.

Gently he led her into the next room. And there she went straight into his arms without a word, gave herself up to them to complete surrender, and raised her lips to his. He kissed her ardently, kissed her eyes and lips and hair, kissed the smoothness of her throat and the palms of her hands. He kissed her as though he could never get enough of her, as though the world were about to end and time was precious.

"Darling, darling," he murmured. "won't you say the words I've been waiting to hear, the words that will bring happiness into my whole life? Neil dearest, tell me you love me!"

Neil looked up into his dark-blue eyes, and her heart thrilled at the love and tenderness she found in them. "Oh, I do love you more than all the world. I loved you from the first, Bruce. Forgive me for holding you off—for sending you away. It nearly killed me, dear. All the light had gone out of the world with you."

He folded her in his arms, his eyes shining down into hers, his lips close. "I felt all along that you loved me, sweetheart—you had to love me! Neil, somehow I knew that anything as strong as the love I felt for you could not be in vain. It had some deep meaning, a beauty that only you could give it with

your own heart. Dearest, now that I know you love me, the whole world seems to be golden and singing. You've made me happier than I ever dreamed of being."

And then he caught her close and his lips pressed down on hers in a kiss that held Neil as if in a magic spell. Her lips trembled beneath his—every fiber of her being seemed to thrill and respond. Over and over a song sang in Neil's heart: "I love him, I love him!"

"Dearest, won't you marry me right away?" he pleaded. "I want you so. I could never let you go now, never do without you. You're everything in the world I've dreamed of and love."

Neil nestled deep in his arms, so strong, so protesting, so adoring. Closing her eyes, she could see the long wonderful years ahead of hers, years of companionship and love, years of peace and security. Always life would be precious and sweet, always she would have Bruce.

"I will marry you," she whispered, as his lips came nearer and his arms held her closer. "And what's more"—she looked deep into his eyes, into his very heart and knew the love that shone there steadily for her—"I know, Bruce dear, that I'll love you and love you—from now until I die!"



### BELOVED

LIKE the soft whisper of a fountain  
In the sunlight is your laughter,  
Or like the song of homing birds  
Nestling under the rafter;  
Your lips are as moist and cool  
As the petals of lilies fair,  
And like a sweet breath from Eden  
Is the perfume of your hair.

Oh, beloved, your kisses sear my soul  
• With longing and wild unrest,  
And I yearn for you, long for your arms  
To fold and hold me to your breast;  
I give you my all, oh, beloved,  
Forever to have and to hold;  
Take me, make me yours forever,  
One flesh, one heart, one soul.

H. H. FARISS.



# The Magic Lantern

By Leta Zoe Adams

FROM his rakish panama to his tan oxfords, Jerry radiated self-confidence as he walked briskly up the curved flagstone walk to the front door of the brick house.

"Is Miss Lorimer in?" he asked, and when the maid murmured that she would see, Jerry thrust a card into her hand. "Just give her this, will you, please?"

On the card under his name, Jerry had scribbled:

Concerning your Sunshine Beach property.

A moment later he was shown into a spacious living room. French doors opened at the far end, framing a pleasant picture—tendrils of wistaria hung in purple glory from a slender pergola. Beyond was the greenness of the lawn.

It was into this alluring frame that the girl stepped.

The only thing that Jerry knew about Tannis Lorimer was that she was the orphaned daughter of a well-to-do citizen of Stanton. If he had thought of her appearance at all, he had visioned her as a maiden lady of uncertain age.

Certainly his imagination had not conjured up the girl who stood in the open doorway. She was a cloud of peach-bloom loveliness, radiant as a breath of spring. Jerry didn't know her dress was organdie, but he did know that her eyes under the drooping pink hat were pansy-purple, and that she had a smile like sunlight.

Before he caught firmly at his galloping senses there was a moment when his equilibrium was just a bit disturbed, which was strange for Jerry.

"You wished to see me about Sunshine Beach?" she asked in a low vibrant voice.

The girl came on into the room and laid a basket of freshly cut roses carefully aside.

Jerry believed in being brief in business. "May I take a few minutes to explain our idea to you, Miss Lorimer?"

She nodded brightly and perched herself in a fluff of organdie on the broad arm of an upholstered chair, indicating with a gesture that Jerry was to seat himself near by. "Now what did you want to say to me?" she encouraged.

Jerry began briskly: "You know how rapidly Stanton is growing, Miss Lorimer. I don't have to go into all of that."

At this point he commenced to haul folders and papers from an inside pocket.

"Now we've been looking things over for some time and we've decided to cut Sunshine Beach up into lots—high-priced lots, you understand, for exclusive residences. There's a crying need for such a district. Now, if you'll look at this map a moment——"

"Who has decided to do this?" interrupted Tannis Lorimer pertly, tilting her head to one side.

"R. G. Wilson, a Florida capitalist. We're both stopping at the Georgian. He and I have been associated together in several very successful deals down there. He's reliable. I can vouch for that. Now, if you'll just look at this map I've rigged up you'll get an idea of the sort of thing we're going to do. The streets are more like boulevards, you see. We'll plant shade trees on either side. I've indicated those by curlicues with a green pencil. The lots will be large so that every home will stand in a park and——"

"You want me to sell you my property there? Is that what you came to see me about?" asked Tannis Lorimer. Her eyes were dancing a little and an elusive dimple ducked in and out of one cheek. Jerry thought he had never seen

a girl who looked less like a business woman, and wondered at her father's having left his entire estate in such inexperienced and youthful hands.

He grinned, and Jerry's grin was quite devastating, as many people who had invested in Florida real estate could testify.

"That's the idea, Miss Lorimer. We have thirty-day options on all the other property but yours. Since yours lies in the very middle of the beach, of course we can't go on without it. What is your price for that property, Miss Lorimer?"

"It has no price," Tannis Lorimer stated sweetly.

Jerry was incredulous. "You don't mean that it isn't for sale?"

"It isn't for sale," Tannis Lorimer repeated. "It will never be for sale."

A slight perspiration not due to the summer heat beaded Jerry's forehead. Certainly it had never occurred to him that Tannis Lorimer might prove difficult—especially since he had seen her.

"'Never' is a long word, Miss Lorimer," he cajoled, trying not to show his agitation. "Evidently you don't realize just what you're saying. You have civic pride and all that sort of thing, of course—want to see your city prosper. Surely you wouldn't want to see an attempt at expansion frustrated because of some personal sentiment."

"You're right about that," agreed Tannis Lorimer brightly. "But this isn't exactly personal sentiment, you see."

"But why else would you feel you didn't want to dispose of the property?"

"Have you ever been to Sunshine Beach on a warm summer afternoon?"

The question took Jerry by surprise. "Why—no, I don't know as I have," he admitted reluctantly. "Why?"

"Sunshine Beach is the only good bathing beach near enough to the city for every one to enjoy," Tannis ex-

plained carefully. "Ever since the property there has belonged to me I've been trying to persuade the other owners of the beach to donate the land to the county for a municipal bathing beach—with bathhouses and everything. They're all wealthy people and could afford to do it. Everybody is willing except old Mr. Stricker, who is dreadfully tight-fisted. But I still have hope that some day he'll realize he can't take all his money with him into the grave and will consent to allow the people from whom he's squeezed his wealth to enjoy a little of it after he's gone."

She paused, her piquant face breaking into a friendly smile. "So you see why Sunshine Beach is not for sale, and never will be, Mr. Shaw."

Jerry did not have red hair for nothing. He was beginning to get warm under the collar, and he knew that he mustn't do so if he ever expected to handle successfully this surprising young person who, with a casual smile, dashed one's hopes of making a tidy sum of money on a sure-fire promotion deal.

"Now look here, Miss Lorimer." He edged forward on his chair and his voice took on the earnest confidential tones he had found so successful in persuading people to sign on the dotted line. "You think over what I've been saying and I'll drop back here to-morrow and talk to you again. How's that?"

"You'll just be wasting your time—and mine," Tannis Lorimer warned him pleasantly. Couldn't he understand the meaning of the word "no," she wondered.

Obviously he couldn't or wouldn't. His mouth gave a dogged little twist and his eyes sent forth sparks of fire. "I don't feel that way about it, Miss Lorimer!"

"You have confidence in yourself, Mr. Shaw!" Tannis dimpled, swinging one trim little foot nonchalantly.

Jerry caught the twinge of sarcasm, and it added another spark to his anger. A chit of a girl like that blocking big business! Why, she couldn't be over twenty-two! And she couldn't weigh more than a hundred and ten pounds! The situation was ridiculous. It was making him ridiculous!

"See here, Miss Lorimer"—he wagged a finger at her severely like a father admonishing a child—"I'm going to come here every day and argue with you until you see this matter in a sensible businesslike light! Every day at two o'clock you're going to find me parked on your doorstep!" he added in a threatening manner.

He hoped the prospect of his company every day would prove too much for her, but she only laughed lyrically at his threat.

"How thoughtful of you, Mr. Shaw! And what if I don't happen to be home when you call?"

"I'll wait until you come!" said Jerry grimly. "I'll make myself such a nuisance you'll be glad to sell to get rid of me!"

He thrust his maps viciously into his pocket, and snatched up the rakish panama.

"Is this what you call high-pressure salesmanship?" Tannis questioned naively, but Jerry, already on his way to the door, gave only a grunt of disdain for an answer.

When the door had closed behind him Tannis ran to one of the front windows and peeped cautiously through the curtains. She watched until Jerry had climbed into his rented roadster and snorted off down the street; then she turned thoughtfully and gathered up her rose basket.

A little later in the garden again, she cut a perfect coral-pink bud, and holding it before her she mused:

"I wonder if attractive young men with red hair are really as heartless and mercenary as they would have the



world think? I just wonder. But how can I ever find out?"

At about that same moment Jerry was tramping up and down the narrow confines of his room at the Georgian, talking in short emphatic bursts to a ponderous man with two double chins and a florid face.

"But I'll get her, 'R. G.'! Leave it to me! I've met these high-handed customers before! It may take a few days, but she'll come to terms! Don't worry about that!"

The ponderous man puffed on a cigar and regarded Jerry shrewdly. "It seems to me you're pretty cut up about this Miss Lorimer business, Jerry. I



*He thrust his maps viciously into his pocket, and snatched up the rakish panama.*

never knew you to care a jot about girls. I hope you're not going to fall in love on my hands right in the middle of this deal."

Jerry whirled on him. "Jumping cat-fish! Fall in love with Tannis Lorimer? That little—that little—spoiled child! Not if she were the last woman on earth!" His hair seemed about to ignite.

"All right, but don't take a bite out of me," R. G. Wilson soothed the outraged spirits of his young manager. "Only I hope you're not long in getting her to sell. We can't hang around here forever!"

"Don't you worry!" Jerry repeated, his voice ringing with confidence. "I'll tend to Miss Tannis Lorimer!"

The next afternoon at two o'clock a red-headed young man rang the doorbell of the Lorimer home. The maid who answered said that Miss Lorimer was not in.

"If you want to see Mrs. Allen, Miss Tannis' aunt, she's in, but Miss Tannis went out to Sunshine Beach this afternoon."

So to Sunshine Beach went Jerry Shaw as fast as a sixty-horse-power engine and gasoline could take him.

It was Thursday, but the firm sand was dotted with picnic parties, and the water with bathers. Jerry parked the car and searched for a girl with pansy-purple eyes and dark hair.

He found her presently far up the beach, stretched out in luxurious comfort, sunning herself after a swim. She looked as though she might be asleep, but when the sand crunched under Jerry's feet she lifted her head.

"Oh, it's you!"

Without waiting for an invitation Jerry sat down on the sand near by. "Were you expecting some one else?" he asked dryly.

"I can't say that I was even expecting you," said Tannis. She sat up and flung a gay linen beach coat over her

shoulders. There was a delicate flush on her cheeks. Quickly Jerry looked away.

"Nice day," he remarked inanely.

"And everybody's having such a lot of fun!" Tannis sparkled, her glance wandering along the beach. "On week days the beach is crowded mostly with mothers and their children. Look at that little tot trying to learn to swim! Isn't he adorable? And look at those three little girls playing on that old raft! They're having the time of their lives! Don't you love to watch them?"

Jerry muttered an answer. The maps of Sunshine Beach were burning a hole in his pocket.

"If it weren't for Sunshine Beach these people wouldn't be able to go swimming except on rare occasions when they could afford to spend the time and money to go down to Agate Beach," Tannis went on pensively. "If Sunshine Beach were cut up and sold in lots there would be more than one youngster, like that little fellow out there, who wouldn't have a healthy summer tan."

Jerry yanked at his hat brim, giving but a cursory glance at the child Tannis spoke of. "Philanthropy and charity are all very well, Miss Lorimer, but everything must give way to progress."

"I know," Tannis nodded sagely. "But if you must have a new district for homes why not cut up that high land back of the beach? It would have a marvelous view of the bay and mountains, and would still leave Sunshine Beach to be enjoyed by every one."

Jerry looked at the land she indicated—gently sloping, green, and inviting. Obviously the view would be great. But lots there wouldn't sell for the prices of beach lots. Somehow he didn't want to confess to Tannis that that was why he wouldn't consider her suggestion.

"Do you own that land, too?"

She shook her head. "I believe the

Simmons Mill Co. owns that whole tract. Probably you could get it for quite a low price."

"But we don't want that land," Jerry told her with a trace of impatience. "We want Sunshine Beach." His voice sank to a persuasive level and he turned his magnetic smile on her with startling suddenness. "Miss Lorimer, let me spread my maps out here on the sand and go into this thing thoroughly. I'm sure you'll see it our way if you'll just give me a chance to talk to you."

Tannis gave him a level, deep look; then she drew her knees up under her and deftly smoothed the sand in front of Jerry.

"There! Trot out your sales talk. I'll stop, look, and listen!"

And Jerry's ego shouted: "I've got her! By George, I've got her!"

For Jerry had always said that if a prospect would only give him a fair chance he could sell him on any deal under the sun.

Then the phrases simply rolled off his practiced tongue. Jerry could talk, and he knew it. He drew a picture of the future Sunshine Beach that surprised even himself. According to Jerry it would be no less than an earthly paradise of gardens and palatial homes with beautiful ladies and princely men strolling about the premises.

Tannis listened attentively enough, reflectively pursing her lips now and then, nodding comprehension.

When Jerry had finished he turned his devastating smile on her once more.

"It'll be the smartest addition of its kind in the country!" he said enthusiastically. "It'll be a wow!"

"Do you think," said Tannis in a voice as sweet as nectar, "that your fine homes and gardens would be more beautiful than the sight of all these people enjoying themselves?"

Jerry flushed unhappily. Could it be possible that this little half pint who

looked more like a doll than a girl was still going to be obstinate?

"Now, Miss Lorimer, be sensible!" he pleaded. "Anybody knows that business must come before sentiment."

She gave him another one of those deep looks which always seemed to work havoc on Jerry's ego. "And anybody knows that the greed for money sometimes closes people's hearts to chivalry and compassion, Mr. Shaw!"

She got to her feet. "Good afternoon."

She walked away from Jerry across the sand. He hesitated a moment, then sprang after her.

"Look here, Miss Lorimer, did you mean that for me—about being greedy?"

Her eyes sparkled up at him mischievously. "Come to think of it, perhaps I did mean it for you! It doesn't matter, does it?"

"Not in the least," said Jerry emphatically. "Good afternoon, Miss Lorimer."

Said Jerry to R. G. Wilson:

"I can't figure her out. She listened to me for an hour, then walked off."

"Without saying a word?"

A reminiscent pucker of annoyance clouded Jerry's brow. "Practically—yes."

R. G. cleared his throat. "It's my idea that you're throwing good time after bad, Jerry. Let's forget the whole thing and pull out. This fellow up in Parkwood writes that there's a wonderful opportunity to clean up on an addition there if the right men get behind it."

Jerry glared at the older man. "Leave and let Miss Lorimer think she's beaten us? Not while I've got a head on my shoulders, R. G.! I tell you I'm going to make her come to terms yet! You see if I don't!"

For a week of lazy afternoons Jerry dogged Tannis Lorimer's footsteps to



*He laid the paddle across the gunwale and leaned toward her wistfully.  
It was, he felt suddenly, a moment for confidences.*

Sunshine Beach. Sometimes he found her in the water playing with the youngsters, who obviously adored her. At other times her green cap would be bobbing far out beyond the float and Jerry would have to sit down on the sand and wait for her to come in.

Then he would pounce on her and empty the entire bag of his salesman's

tricks. Late in the afternoon she would go back to the city in her own car and he in his rented one. When the traffic was light he'd even drive along beside her, arguing, trying to win her over to his side.

"I'm bound to wear down her resistance in time," he told R. G. Wilson confidently every evening when he re-

turned to the hotel. "It's as certain as sunrise."

R. G. Wilson made no comments.

One day Jerry found Tannis with a canoe, and they went for a leisurely paddle. She had a pink parasol and he tried not to look at her too much. When he did his arguments sounded flat and his tongue got twisted a little.

It was such a perfect day, anyway. Any one might have been excused for finding business flat. There were cool little clouds floating in a sea of blue, and the water was alive with golden sparkles.

The shouting of the children on Sunshine Beach grew fainter as they drifted down along the shore. Then the sun set and they were bathed in a tenuous glow of mauve and saffron and rose.

No matter how hard Jerry tried he couldn't keep his eyes off the girl curled up among the cushions opposite him.

He laid the paddle across the gunwale and leaned toward her wistfully. It was, he felt suddenly, a moment for confidences.

"Tell me, Miss Lorimer—why do you come to the beach every day? Is it because you think the sight of all these people enjoying themselves will make me give up my idea for making a subdivision here?"

She met his eyes frankly. "That's part of it."

"And the other part?" Jerry insisted. He held his breath as he waited for her answer.

"You came clad in glittering armor!" she quoted musingly. "I wanted to find out if there was a heart under the clanking metal trappings."

Inwardly Jerry flinched at her description of himself, but his gaze was still fixed earnestly upon her.

"And if you should find there's nothing but the glittering armor?"

"I would know I had been mistaken."

"And if you should find a heart underneath?" Jerry questioned softly, as though treading on holy ground.

"Then," said Tannis Lorimer, looking toward the sunset, "I would be glad."

Her face glowed as though a lamp had suddenly been lighted from within—or it may have been merely an effect of the sunset colors upon her delicate features.

Jerry's fingers curved slowly about the paddle handle. Silence hung between them for a moment like a heavy curtain. Then Tannis stirred, turned back to him.

"I think it's time to go back, Mr. Shaw. Shall I take a paddle?"

"I can manage, thank you," said Jerry rigidly.

He had the feeling that a spell had been broken.

R. G. Wilson didn't wait for Jerry's usual speech that evening.

"That girl is just having a good time at our expense. She's playing us for a couple of boobs—especially you. I'm not going to wait on her any longer. To-morrow we pull out for Parkwood and she can keep her beach."

"But R. G., look here——" Jerry began argumentatively.

The capitalist raised a restraining hand. "Keep the noise to yourself, Jerry."

He went into his own room, closing the door.

Jerry took a number of turns about his room and smoked half an inch of each of four cigarettes. Then he snatched up his hat.

Thirty minutes or so later he was at the Lorimer house, asking to see Tannis.

He was referred to Tannis' aunt, Mrs. Allen, who told him that her niece had gone to a dinner dance and wouldn't be in until late.

Jerry was thoughtful. "It's very im-

portant. Could I leave a note, Mrs. Allen?"

He could.

So Jerry wrote on a page of his memorandum book:

I ask you once again—will you sell the Sunshine Beach property? If not, we leave Stanton to-morrow noon.

That evening Jerry walked the streets of Stanton, his panama pulled low over his forehead, his eyes moody.

She had gone to a dinner dance! Where? With whom? A man, of course. What kind of man?

It suddenly occurred to Jerry that Tannis Lorimer probably went out with men often. It occurred to him further that after he left Stanton she would probably continue to go out with men. Some day, without doubt, she would marry one of them. He walked faster and faster.

It was late when he came in, weary, but he was up early the next morning, splashing in his shower, though not singing as he usually did.

He was just going down to breakfast when a messenger came to the door and gave him an envelope. The writing was not familiar, yet his hand trembled a little as he slit the flap with a nail file. He read:

And I ask you—if I agree to sell my Sunshine Beach property, do you still want to buy it?

"What under the sun!" he muttered. What did she mean? Buy it? Of course, he wanted to buy it! That is, R. G. did.

He started for the door connecting his room with R. G. Wilson's to tell him they'd won; then suddenly he halted.

"You came clad in glittering armor!"

He read the note again. He thought of Sunshine Beach—kiddies playing in

the sand, splashing in the water, laughing, happy.

"I wanted to find out if there was a heart under the clanking metal trap-pings!" And this was her test! Her test for him!

A slow smile crept across Jerry's features—a smile of understanding, and of inspiration, too. He opened the door with a jerk.

"Say, R. G., are you up yet? I've got a proposition to put up to you!"

Tannis Lorimer had just come downstairs for lunch when the maid announced Jerry Shaw. She gave a few pats to the smooth waves of her hair and went to meet him in the living room.

She was in blue—the blue of mountain canyons at sunset—and her eyes were like woodland pools dabbled with sunlight.

"You received my note this morning?" she asked. Jerry nodded. "And you've come to tell me——" Her voice was not quite steady.

"That I've decided not to buy!"

"Oh!" Tannis breathed.

Jerry moved a step nearer. "I've been all morning persuading R. G. into developing the heights instead of the beach, and I've won him over. Are you glad?"

"Am I glad?" Impulsively Tannis flung out a hand and touched his arm gently.

Jerry caught that hand, held it in both of his in a hard, jealous grip.

"Tannis! Would you listen if I told you something else—something that's crying out to be said to you?"

"Is it a long speech—like those you've been making to me for two weeks at the beach?" she teased.

"I could make it either short or long. I can make it last a minute or a day," Jerry dared. "Shortened it's just this—I love you! But that's not nearly all. I love you, but in so many ways, Tan-



*"I—I'll marry you," Tannis whispered, her eyes shining up into his, her lips trembling. "Oh, I love you, too!"*

nis! You're strange and mysterious and lovely! You're so beautiful you hurt like a minor melody. Just to be near you is a kind of happiness. But that's not all. Listen, Tannis," he said desperately.

"You walk in light. It radiates from you as though there were a magic lan-

tern burning within you. Where you are the world is radiant and clear and bright. Oh, Tannis, I want to stay near you. I want to move always in that light you shed! Away from you it's dark—dark. How can I make you understand how I feel——"

Tannis was in his arms. Her lips,



lifted up, answered him more completely than words.

The maid, coming in to announce luncheon, backed out hastily.

"Tannis dear——"

"Yes, Jerry."

"To-morrow I'm going to see old Mr. Stricker about donating his property to the county so that nobody can ever take Sunshine Beach away from the children. Do you suppose I can succeed with him where you've failed?"

Tannis smiled up at him, love and pride in her smile, love shining in her eyes.

"Of course you can," she whispered. "Because, Jerry, you know you can talk—divinely!"

And then Jerry kissed her again and again.

"Tannis, Tannis darling," he cried. "Won't you marry me? Nothing in the world is worth anything if I can't have you. You're the one thing I love and adore and want forever!"

He bent and tenderly kissed her soft rose lips, so clinging and responsive against his own.

"I—I'll marry you," Tannis whispered, her eyes shining up into his, her lips trembling. "Oh, I love you, too!"

"Sweetheart!" Jerry held her close and buried his face in her hair. "I—I can't tell you how much I love you! I've loved you from the start, from the very moment I first saw you, so sweet

and adorable and lovely. The reason I pursued you so was—well, I just know I cared a lot more about you, Tannis, than I ever could about a piece of property. I thought I wanted to win, but—oh, darling, I just wanted you!"

"And I let you bother me and pursue me," Tannis said naively, "just because you were you. I—I wanted to see more of you. And I did want you to understand how I felt about it. I didn't want to be disappointed in you—I couldn't bear that! You see, dear, I hoped you were the man I thought you were, the man I loved from that first day!"

He gathered her in his arms, close to his racing heart. And then his lips pressed down slowly on her warm eager lips. They clung together for a moment, one in the divine thrill that coursed through them.

"I'll always love you," he whispered. "I couldn't help loving you, Tannis dear. It was meant from the start. You're so sweet and lovely—everything I've dreamed of and wanted."

He kissed her again and again, lost in the magic light of her presence, caught in the magic spell of love.

"I'll always follow your light," he murmured tenderly, holding her close to him. "Always ask for your love. There's only one thing I want to follow all my life—darling, that's you, and the magic lantern that is your love!"





## As a Vine to a Trellis

By Judith Hersey

**I** CREEP to your feet as a vine to a trellis,  
Happy because of the journeying past,  
Through grasses and flowers, o'er hillsides and valleys,  
Burning and eager to clasp you at last  
In unyielding tendrils of leafy embraces  
And kisses of passion whence blossoms are born,  
Purple in sunshine and mauve in the shadows,  
Blooming twin-wedded and bearing no thorn.

I creep to your feet in rapt adoration,  
Folding you closer each day and each year,  
Contented with knowing that we are together,  
Though seasons of change fade out and appear.  
We'll shelter the rapture of others who wander  
In search of a shrine where they may commune,  
And murmur the vows we still tenderly utter  
'Neath the peace of the stars and shine of the moon.



## CHAPTER VI.

IT was as if Hugh and Jan were alone in the world; as if the ship had suddenly become dead and was deserted save for herself and this shy-looking, broad-shouldered man who stood filling up the doorway of her cabin, hat in hand.

Hugh Stafford was wearing a linen suit, and he had not had his hair cropped as closely as he generally did. Jan remembered that once she had told him she did not like him to look so much like an escaped convict.

# Trampled Hearts

By  
Ruby M. Ayres

*A Serial—Part III.*

No doubt he had remembered that also. He carried an enormous bunch of roses in his hand.

"Well, you're here," he said huskily; and then, with sudden real feeling, added, "Thank Heaven."

"Oh, Hugh——"

It was as if some one had suddenly torn aside the veil of

years, and they were back again at Long Barn with her dad somewhere in the background. Jan knew there was nothing to fear in this shy giant who looked at her with such humble adoration. In some strange fashion, in spite of her

unhappiness Jan felt as if she had come home—knew she had found a friend.

"Oh, Hugh," she said again, and found herself weeping.

He dropped the roses and his big hat and took her in his arms. She could feel his heart thumping as he held her close to him.

"Don't cry. You'll be all right with me, Jan. Poor little girl—don't cry."

They were awkward, ineloquent words of comfort yet they were comforting.

But he made no attempt to kiss her; in the midst of all her emotion Jan realized this with a sense of gratitude, and tried desperately to control herself.

"It's silly. I don't know why I'm crying," she apologized, and then, with a broken laugh, added, "Yes, I do. I've been so afraid of meeting you. Silly, wasn't it? But I shall be all right now." She looked up at him, the tears still wet on her cheeks. "Imagine being afraid of you! It's only because it's been so long since I've seen you. I believe I'd almost forgotten what you were like," and then, with an effort to speak lightly, she went on. "You haven't got fat, anyway—or bald."

"Did you think I might have?"

"I was half afraid." She could manage to laugh more naturally now, and she gently disengaged herself from his arms, keeping up a running flow of conversation to hide her nervousness. "I didn't sleep very well last night—excitement I suppose. And I was up early this morning to see Table Mountain, and——"

"I thought of you."

"Were you up, too? It's a wonderful sight, isn't it? We've had a splendid trip, and the people have all been so kind. So many of them seemed to know you. In fact I felt as if I was almost the only one on board who didn't really know you."

"You met Lydia Strange?"

"Yes, and I like her so much. She is a great friend of yours, Hugh."

"I'm glad you like her. I want you to be friends."

Jan looked around the cabin; she still had the curious feeling that she and Hugh Stafford were quite alone in the world.

She rattled on: "I've got a lot of baggage. There were so many things I couldn't bear to leave behind. I hope you won't mind. Nell said she was sure you would not be——"

"Nell?" he laughed reminiscently. "How is she? I liked Nell."

"She liked you, too; she said you were the best of all the—well, she liked you better than any other man I knew. She's just the same. She has been so good to me—a real friend. Shall we have much trouble with the customs?"

"No, it will be quite easy. I've got a friend who——" He was looking round the cabin with critical eyes. "I'm glad they fixed you up all right."

"It was all due to you. I can't thank you enough, Hugh. And these lovely roses—look what you've done to them!"

She picked them up from the floor where they still lay, and held them to her cheek.

#### THE STORY SO FAR:

**J**AN WYNDHAM, alone in the world, goes out to South Africa to marry Hugh Stafford, whom she does not love, but who is very wealthy. On board ship she meets Nigel Pawle, a man whom she and her father had known two years before in Aiken. Jan fell in love with Nigel then, and when she sees him again realizes that she still loves him. She knows that, like herself, Nigel is on his way to Africa to be married. At the end of the trip he confesses to Jan that he still loves her. Jan admits she loves him and he leaves her. She looks up a few minutes later to find Hugh Stafford standing in the door looking at her.

"They're like the roses we had in the garden at Long Barn," she said wistfully.

"I thought you'd like them."

"You think of everything."

She was putting on her coat, and gathering up bag, gloves and odds and ends. "I suppose we ought to go. I must just say good-by to the captain and one or two other people."

"I'll see about the baggage. Don't worry about anything." But when she would have passed him to go out of the cabin he stopped her. "I've reserved a suite for you at the Queen's at Seapoint—it's the best hotel. I'm staying in town myself. I thought you'd like a few days' rest before—well, before we make any plans."

"You're too kind to me, Hugh." She had hated hearing that he had already made arrangements for their marriage—that perhaps even to-morrow—

She heard Nigel Pawle's voice behind Hugh's broad shoulders.

"I've just come to say good-by, Miss Wyndham."

"Oh—"

She introduced the two men breathlessly.

"It's so sad saying good-by at the end of a voyage. Don't you think so, Hugh?" She hardly knew what she was saying. "Mr. Pawle is going up country."

"No," said Nigel, "I am staying at the Queen's for a few days."

"Miss Wyndham is staying there also," Hugh replied.

Jan turned away. She heard the two men talking in desultory fashion, heard Hugh say: "We shall meet again I expect," and heard herself say:

"Is Africa such a tiny place that you are always bumping into people you know?"

"It's surprising how often you do run across friends," Hugh answered. He glanced at his wrist watch. "I'll just see what my boy is doing with your

baggage. I'll meet you on deck, Jan." Then he was gone, leaving Jan and Nigel alone together.

There was a tragic silence which Jan broke desperately.

"Well, what do you think of him?"

Pawle answered: "I'm sure he's a mighty fine fellow, but all the same I should like to shoot him." Then hoarsely he asked, "Did you let him kiss you?"

"No—no."

"You swear it, Jan?"

"I swear it."

He put his hands on her shoulders.

"Kiss me then, my dear."

She shrank away from him. "Oh, don't, Nigel. Some one will see us."

He looked down at her, his eyes blazing. "I don't care, Jan darling. I'd just as soon kiss you on deck before every one. I love you and I want the world to know it."

"But, Nigel," she pleaded. "You forget about Hugh and that I—"

He drew back from her, his face white. "You have started to change already, Jan. You are beginning to forget me."

A look of utter misery passed across Jan's face. "Oh, Nigel, why do you only make things harder for me? You know that I love you—that I have always loved you."

His dark eyes filled with tenderness. "Kiss me then, darling!"

He drew her to him, but as their lips touched Jan shuddered and looked up in terror.

"Nigel, I'm sure that I heard some one in the corridor."

"There was nobody," he comforted her.

But Jan had been right. Hugh Stafford, coming back to give her some small instruction, had seen her in Pawle's arms.

He was not the man to make a scene, but he had the queer feeling that some one had hit him over the head, making

him feel rather dazed, as he turned and went away as quietly as he could manage it.

He knew that people got absurdly friendly on board ship; though he had never been that sort himself, he knew quite well that there were many men, married as well as single, who thought nothing of having a flirtation with a woman on board ship and then forgetting all about it. Somehow he had not expected Jan to be that sort of woman.

As Pawle released Jan he said, "At least we shall be in the same hotel. Will Stafford be there?"

"No."

"Thank heavens for that."

Jan turned away from him. "It's an impossible situation—I can't bear it," she said desperately.

"Let me tell him then. What's the use of waiting? It's kinder to tell him at once instead of letting him live in a fool's paradise."

"No, no, no——"

"Jan, if you love me——"

She shook her head. "I can't hurt him like this even if I do love you—he's been so good to me."

"And I have not, you mean."

"Are you trying to quarrel with me?"

"I think I'm half mad—to see that fellow here with you——" He controlled himself suddenly. "Well, I'll say good-by for the present"—this was for the benefit of Miss Graham, who came suddenly upon them with her soft tread.

"I just wanted to say good-by, Miss Wyndham, but if I am in the way——"

"Mr. Pawle has been saying good-by, too," Jan said. "He is going now."

Nigel left them and Miss Graham said smoothly:

"So sad, parting after a happy voyage, isn't it? And you must have made so many friends. I am going up to Johannesburg on the mail train but I suppose you will be staying in Capetown."

"For the present—yes," Jan replied. "Mr. Pawle is staying also, I believe."

"Is he? I really don't know."

"I never used to be a liar," Jan thought hysterically when Miss Graham had gone. She felt giddy and bewildered, like something harmless and defenseless that has been caught in a trap and surrounded by an unfriendly crowd who will not set her free.

And yet Hugh was not unfriendly; Hugh would do anything in the world to make her happy. That was what made it all so hard, so impossible to hurt him. And yet she would have to do it sooner or later—not for long could this impossible situation continue.

Nigel was jealous already, Jan knew, and staying in the same hotel—Mrs. Gallant came to the cabin and interrupted Jan's musings.

"Anything more I can do for you, Miss Wyndham?" Jan had already tipped her generously. "I'm really sorry to say good-by to you," the woman went on. "As nice a lady as I've ever sailed with, and I've had some on the ship who——" She still spoke as if she was the commander.

"There's nothing more, thank you," Jan said hurriedly. These good-bys were beginning to get on her nerves. "I'm just going—I hope we shall meet again some day."

"Sure to," Mrs. Gallant said comfortably. "The world's small, and people go home a lot from Africa. Poor dears, they get terribly homesick."

"Job's comforter," Jan laughed. She shook hands with the woman hurriedly and fled from the cabin to avoid further eloquence.

On the deck she encountered Colonel Dawson.

"Hello, my dear! I've been looking for you," he said. "I've seen Stafford. Looks great, doesn't he?"

"Yes."

"Lucky idiot. Well, he deserves his

luck. Good-by, little lady, and God bless you!"

"If he says 'I hope we shall meet again' I shall scream," Jan told herself, but he did not say it. He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it, and then turned away. Perhaps life had taught him that some things are best ended where they begin.

Jan could not find Hugh, but the two girls, Kitty and Dora, fell upon her and demanded to be told if he had arrived, and if so, where he was.

"We simply must have a peep at him," Dora declared. "And if you're short of bridesmaids, we shall be available for the next month."

"We should love carrying your train up the aisle," Kitty chimed in.

Jan had to laugh.

"I don't suppose I shall have a train or bridesmaids," she said. "And besides—oh, here he is——"

She introduced Hugh to the two girls, and listened to their gush.

"We're so thrilled to meet you. We just adore Jan. We want to be her bridesmaids, but I'm afraid there's nothing doing unless you put in a word for us and insist."

Hugh was unused to being besieged in such a fashion; he answered rather awkwardly that nothing was decided yet—it was awfully kind of them, but still——

"I think he's too sweet for words," Kitty whispered as they kissed Jan a final good-by. "Every bit as divine as Nigel Pawle—only different."

"Yes—only different," Jan's heart echoed, and she found herself searching the crowd longingly for another glimpse of the man she loved.

The voyage which she had so dreaded was over, and life was again taking Pawle away from her.

Even though they would be in the same hotel, nothing could be the same; she was going to marry Hugh Stafford.

Yes, but was she? She asked herself the startled question and could find no answer to it. Last night she would have said with positive conviction: "I will not marry him! I will never marry him——"

Even this morning when she and Pawle stood side by side on deck watching this new and strange country creep out of the gray dawn she would have said the same, but now——

"If you are ready I think we had better go ashore." Hugh was saying beside her, and like some one in a dream she followed him down the long gang-plank.

When her feet touched land, she turned to look back at the big ship. Another chapter of her life had ended—she had crossed the bridge that divided her from New York and this new country.

Somebody waved to her from the promenade deck, and she waved back, her eyes suddenly filled with tears and a choked feeling in her throat.

Life seemed to be made up of good-by, and an eternal moving on.

As she turned around she saw that a fresh ordeal awaited her. A little crowd of people, all friends of Hugh's, had come down to welcome her.

"I tried to prevent it," Hugh apologized when at last they were alone and were driving away together. "But they insisted on coming. I hope you didn't mind."

"It was very kind of them," Jan replied.

"Lena Cunningham wanted you to stay with her till we—well, to stay with her at first. She meant it kindly, but I thought you would rather be free for a little while. Strangers are apt to be a bit tiring."

"Which one was Lena Cunningham?" Jan had been introduced to so many people she had been unable to remember who was who.

Hugh explained as best he could.





*Hugh Stafford, coming back to give her some small instruction, had seen her in Pawle's arms.*

"She had on a green hat and her hair is red. You'll like her. The fat chap with the big laugh is her husband—he's my best friend. He'll be my best man, too," he added, shyly.

"Oh," said Jan; she drew a little away from him. "Is this your car?" she asked with an effort to change the conversation.

"No, I sold mine last week. It was an old bus, and I thought I would wait till you came to choose another."

Every moment with him and every word he spoke seemed like a fresh link welded into the chain that held her captive.

She was suddenly conscious of extreme weariness, more physical than

mental. The hot sunshine made her eyes ache, and she thought longingly of a cool day on Long Island, and trees and the sound of a breeze through the leaves.

With an effort she pulled herself together and sat up.

"If I'm not very gay you must forgive me. I believe I'm awfully tired. To-morrow will be different," she said.

To-morrow—which she dreaded.

"Excitement is always tiring," Hugh replied. He spoke quietly, but his heart was still thumping. It seemed to him that he had hardly been able to breathe since the moment he saw Jan. To-morrow, as she had said, things would be different—he would have become sane again, or wouldn't he? He looked at her from beneath the wide brim of his hat. She was more beautiful than his aching heart had remembered her during the years since they had met; more desirable, more dear—and the impossible miracle had happened at last and soon she would be his wife.

It was an unkind freak of fate that suddenly showed him Nigel Pawle's dark face, or had it always been there in his subconscious mind since the moment he had seen him kiss Jan?

He shook his broad shoulders to get rid of the thought.

There was nothing mean or suspicious in Hugh Stafford's nature; he felt that he could kick himself for allowing even a tiny cloud to settle on the horizon of his great happiness.

His hand fell to hers in a sudden bearlike grip.

"You're here with me," he said with rough emotion. "And nothing else matters."

The view from the hotel window was wonderful. Jan stood for a long time looking out over the rocky coast to the blue bay beyond, and to the far horizon which—many, many miles away—meant New York and home.

She had the best suite in the hotel, Hugh had seen to that, and the rooms were filled with flowers.

She had not yet taken off her hat, though her head ached and she felt tired and cross. Her baggage was piled in one of the rooms—she had been to look at it just now to see if it was all there.

It had not been very long ago since she had looked at those same labels in her bedroom at Long Barn and said miserably to Nell: "I know I shall be sick all the way."

Hugh had been distressed because she had brought no maid.

"I must ask Lena to find you one and——"

But Jan had refused; there would be sure to be a maid in the hotel who could do anything she wanted. "Besides, I would rather be alone," she had insisted gently.

Hugh was not happy about her. He had taken the suite at the hotel with the best of intentions. "You ought not to be here alone. I hate the thought of it, Jan," he had said a few moments before he left her.

Jan had laughed. "Nonsense. You forget that I am a very independent and much traveled young woman. Besides, I shan't be alone. There are quite a lot of people from the boat staying here."

He had not looked satisfied.

"It won't be for long, that's one thing," had been his last words."

Not for long! For how long then? Until she could find the courage to say to him, "I can't do it. I love Nigel Pawle. I can't marry you." Would she ever find that courage? With every moment she felt it to be slipping away from her; felt herself being hedged in by a wall of circumstances which she could never break down.

To-morrow the Cunninghams were giving a dinner party in her honor.

"They wanted to have it to-night," Hugh told her diffidently. "But I

thought it was too soon. I said you would be tired."

"I am rather tired," Jan had replied.

"But to-morrow—if you don't mind. They're so kind, and are so pleased at the thought of welcoming you."

It was impossible to deny the pleasure in his eyes.

"Of course—to-morrow," Jan had said.

He had followed her up to her rooms. He had been like a schoolboy who has shyly brought some one a handsome present and cannot resist the pleasure of seeing it opened and inspected.

"It's the best I could get," he said humbly.

"Oh, Hugh, it's far too good. You'll spoil me."

"I've waited so long for the chance."

He was standing close to her, and every nerve in her body seemed taut with the dread that he would want to take her in his arms and kiss her. On the boat it had been different—that sudden impulse to hold her to him because she had been crying, had seemed natural; but now when he was the only one left to her in the world— Her heart had almost seemed to stop beating. What would she do if he kissed her? What would she say? She thought of Nigel's jealous eyes.

But Hugh had not kissed her—had not even attempted to kiss her.

"I shan't come back till the evening," he said. "You must have a good rest. But if you could have dinner with me—"

"Of course. I'll wear my best dress."

It had been stupid of her to have said that—it was giving encouragement where she must not give it.

"I'll be back at eight," he said. "And afterward we'll have a drive around. Jan, are you going to like South Africa?"

She had schooled herself to smile.

"I haven't seen it yet. You mustn't be impatient."

"I know, but I so much want you to like it."

There was a new sort of humility about him which made him appear younger than she had remembered him.

And now he had gone—she had heard him whistling light-heartedly as he went away, and for a little while she would be alone.

The bay was so beautiful—so beautiful that it made her heart ache in a queer, unsatisfied way. It would have been such a wonderful adventure if only she had been coming to a man she loved, instead of—

A native maid came to the door. She was young and smiling, and had beautiful teeth and shining eyes.

Could she do anything for the missis?

"I should like a bath, please, and then I think I'll have some lunch upstairs and rest a while. My keys are on the table. If you'll unlock the wardrobe trunk that will be enough for the present."

The bath refreshed her and took some of the tiredness from her body. After all, she was young, and the sunshine was wonderful on the bay, and life lay before her.

She had not seen Nigel since she left the boat; she did not know if he had arrived at the hotel or not.

Suddenly she found herself wondering why Hugh had not wanted to kiss her; it seemed a little strange. She was glad that he had not, but yet—after all this time it would have seemed the natural thing.

Poor Hugh—he was worth loving, but she had no love to give him; all she could do was to be honest and tell him the truth.

As her dear old dad always said, trouble was never so bad to meet if you stared it in the face instead of turning your back on it. That was what she was doing—turning her back on it like a coward. Well, that would have to be changed; she must turn and look into

Hugh's blue eyes and say the words that would break his heart. She wondered if he knew Pansy Thwaites; probably he did—every one seemed to know of every one else in this strange country. She lunched upstairs and showed the girl where to put some of her clothes. "What is your name?" she asked her.

The girl's white teeth flashed in a friendly smile.

"Violet, missis."

Jan was conscious of a faint disappointment; she had almost expected a name like Topsy.

She sent the girl away and went to the window again.

There was a cool breeze blowing in spite of the hot sun, and suddenly Jan felt that she must go out in the open—the room seemed to stifle her.

She took her hat and went down through the garden to the rocks where the waves broke and raced around in little whirlpools of white foam. A liner was going out—going home.

A little sick feeling touched Jan's heart. It was only a few hours since she had landed, and already the sight of a homeward-bound steamer made her want to swim out after it. How utterly foolish she was! She had been away from home scores of times before, and had thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. Yes, but this was different—her father had always been with her then, and she had known that soon they would go back home, but now—she was an exile—there was no home to go back to.

"Coward, coward," Jan muttered.

She sat down on a rock close to the water's edge, and took off her hat. The sunshine was glorious—the sunshine that Lydia had confessed she grew so weary of. Jan wondered where Lydia had gone; she was a strange woman, and yet there was something about her that one instinctively liked and remembered with a little softening of the heart. What was it she had said only that morning when they parted?

"Be patient and give life a chance, and I'm sure you'll be happy. Hugh is a fine man."

Why had she said that? Had her beautiful eyes seen that she and Nigel — But there had been nothing to see; Jan was sure that nobody could have guessed the underlying tragedy of those days on the boat.

There was a quick step behind her, and, turning, Jan saw the man of whom she was thinking.

"I saw you come out, and I followed. Do you mind?" Pawle asked.

"I haven't much choice, have I?" but she could not keep the welcome from her eyes.

"Where's Stafford?"

"Gone."

"Gone!"

She saw the sudden fire in his eyes, and realized how he had interpreted her words.

"You've told him——"

"Oh, no—no——" Again misery filled her heart.

"Why not?" he questioned sharply.

She felt vaguely irritated by his impatience. After all, there were other things in the world besides love; one had to be decent.

She was silent, looking away from him to that homeward-bound ship, and he said suddenly, roughly:

"You don't intend to tell him. You are afraid of hurting him—it doesn't matter about me."

She was stung to an angry retort.

"You have never been so very considerate for me, have you? I might as well remind you that you have not told Mrs. Thwaites——"

"You know I intend doing so at once," he interrupted.

"Oh, don't let us quarrel. Things are bad enough."

"They will be no better until you send Stafford away."

"I shall send him away, but in my own time," she replied.



"When? To-night? To-morrow? The day after? Next week?" His voice was angry with pain. "I know women. They hate doing unpleasant things. You'll put it off and off——"

"You will not improve things by talking like that. My life is my own, after all." But even as she spoke she remembered how only this morning—it seemed years ago—this man had taken her in his arms in the gray dawn and said: "You belong to me, remember,

*When her feet touched land, she turned to look back at the big ship. Another chapter of her life had ended.*

whatever happens."

Was it her fault that already that moment seemed like madness. She laid a hand on his arm.

"Don't be unkind, Nigel—you must see how difficult it is."

"You don't see how hard it is on me.

Every one in the hotel knows you are to marry him, and I have to stand by and grin and pretend to like it."

"As I did—two years ago—when you went back to India," Jan said bitterly, and then could have bitten her tongue through with shame at the confession.

There was a sharp silence which Jan finally broke with a little, hard laugh.

"Isn't it rather silly sitting here being rude to one another?" she asked.

"Do you call it being rude?"

"Nigel—dear——"

"Oh, my darling, if you love me——"

"I do love you, but you must wait. You say I am cruel to you, but you don't realize how cruel you are trying to make me to another man who deserves all the happiness he can get."

"It is more cruel to keep him in ignorance," he muttered.

Jan only shook her head and he went on urgently:

"When will you tell him then? Tomorrow?"

"I don't know," Jan replied thoughtfully.

"Let me tell him," Nigel begged.

She shook her head. "No, you must see that would be impossible. He has done so much for me."

"And don't you think I want to do everything for you?"

"Nigel, aren't you just thinking of yourself all the time?"

"Perhaps I am—perhaps I'm afraid to think of any one else."

Jan stood up, her soft hair ruffled in the breeze.

"It's no use talking. I wish you were not in the same hotel with me."

"I am not going to leave, if that's what you mean."

"I haven't asked you to. I only want you to be patient."

"Is Stafford coming back this evening?"

"Yes—to dinner."

"And you are dining with him alone, and I shall have to sit by and see you."

"You are making it terribly hard for me. Don't you think I would far rather it was you?"

He looked down at her intently. "Do you mean that?"

"I wish I didn't," Jan said desolately.

She could have been almost happy, she thought wildly, but for this man. If she had never met him again she felt that she could at least have been contented with Hugh. He was so deserving of any consideration she could give him. Perhaps but for meeting Nigel again the fear of her marriage might ultimately have changed into affection, if nothing more; but as it was—looking ahead she could see nothing but pain and suffering, if not for herself, at least for Hugh Stafford.

"I think I'll go in," she said unsteadily. "I must unpack, and besides—if we're seen together——"

He laughed harshly. "It has come to that, has it? Very well——" He raised his hat and turned to leave her, but Jan stopped him.

"Oh, Nigel, you do hurt me so."

"My dear, dear one—I love you so."

He stood looking at her for a moment, his eyes dark with pain, and it was she who turned and walked back to the hotel alone, leaving him standing there.

When she got to her rooms she looked again out of the window in search of the liner that she knew was homeward bound.

Only a faint blur on the horizon and a fading trail of smoke marked its passage, and with a sudden pain Jan felt that she was indeed left behind in a strange country.

## CHAPTER VII.

Hugh was waiting for her in the cool lobby when she went down to dinner. He was pacing restlessly up and down, oblivious of the fact that quite a number of people were watching him interestedly. He came forward with almost pathetic eagerness when he saw her step out of the elevator.

"I thought you were never coming."

She laughed. "I thought you said eight o'clock—it's only just eight."

"I've been here half an hour."

Jan was conscious of the admiration in his eyes, and knew guiltily that she had done her best to deserve it.

At first she had decided to wear something very simple and ordinary, but at the last minute she had changed her mind, and had chosen one of her new evening gowns.

"Bought with Hugh's money!" she told herself with a sigh as she took a last glance at her reflection in the mirror. It was of black and white with a trailing, graceful skirt, and a little tight-fitting bodice of white satin, covered with tiny brilliants.

If only she had been dining with Nigel—if only this had been a celebration of the great happiness they could have found together, she thought to herself.

As she turned to leave her room a note had been brought to her in his writing.

Don't forget how much I love you.

She kissed the few words before she carefully destroyed them.

"Any one would think I was a married woman with a new boy friend," she thought cynically. "It's as bad anyway, and I feel almost as guilty."

But she felt proud of Hugh; he was a fine-looking man, and a man who was bound to attract attention wherever he went.

"I've been thinking," he said abruptly as they went out onto the veranda and found chairs in a corner. "It would have been better for you to have gone to the Cunninghams. You don't know the country and you're not used to native servants."

Jan laughed. "Why, what nonsense! I've got the dearest maid with the most wonderful teeth, and her name is Violet. And, Hugh, I simply must have a cocktail."

She felt more at ease with him now; for the moment she forgot she was so far away from home; they might have been at any New York restaurant, dining together as she had so often dined with him when he came to the United States.

"I have so much to talk to you about," Hugh said. His eyes never left her face; he lifted his glass and toasted her.

"To the future and to our happiness together."

She smiled, but she could not speak. Alas, poor Hugh—what future was there for him?

"I think it is I who have so much to say to you," she said presently. "Hugh—what did you think when you knew I had really started?"

"I couldn't think—I couldn't feel anything. I kept telling myself it wasn't true—even when I knew the ship was in sight."

"And supposing it hadn't been true?"

He was silent for a moment, then he shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Why suppose anything so—well, why suppose it?"

In her heart Jan thought, "Now is the moment to tell him. Now, surely he must wonder—begin to understand—"

She caught her breath and her lips moved, but already the moment had gone and Hugh was saying:

"I'm not much of a person at expressing what I feel. I wish I could, but—you know, don't you, Jan?"

Yes, she knew, and would have given her soul not to know.

Perhaps he felt the little constraint, for he stood up suddenly.

"I'm sure you're starving, and I ordered dinner for eight fifteen punctually. Come along, my dear."

He held out his hand to her, but Jan only laughed and avoided it.

"I am hungry—very hungry."

They went together to the dining room. People were occupying most of the tables, and Jan felt her color fade

as across the long room she saw Nigel Pawle at a table—alone.

Something in her heart seemed to cry out to him, but after that one glance she dared not look his way again, and presently she was facing Hugh across a tiny table, in the center of which was a huge bouquet of lovely red roses.

"Hugh, you should not have spent so much money on flowers," she scolded him.

"I know how fond you are of them," he answered.

Jan sat facing Nigel. She would have given years of her life for the courage to ask Hugh to change seats with her, but she was sure if she did so he would guess something—perhaps sense her emotion.

The dinner was a torment. Every time she laughed she felt ashamed; when Hugh toasted her she wanted to push back her chair and cry out, "Not you—not you! I can't go on—it's not you."

But she sat there, dainty and smiling, with the eyes of every one in the room upon her. There were several people from the boat there, and she knew they must be watching her, and criticizing Hugh.

Well, he would pass muster anywhere; he was a man to be proud of. Then she saw that Nigel had risen from his chair and was coming toward them on his way out. She pressed her feet hard to the floor and sat very still.

Would he speak? Or would he go by as if he did not know her? She could hardly breathe and her heart beat so loudly she was sure Hugh must hear it.

Nigel came down the room slowly and deliberately and stopped at their table. He made some casual remark to Hugh, but Jan could not hear what it was; she was blind and deaf; then he spoke to her; but she could not hear that either, though she smiled as if she understood, and then with a little bow he turned away.

When he had gone Hugh said, "What did you say his name was?"

"Pawle—Nigel Pawle."

Was her voice really as strange as it sounded to her own ears, she wondered? With an effort she forced herself to go on speaking.

"Father and I met him at Aiken two years ago. He was something in India then. I've never seen him since till I found we were to be fellow passengers."

"Is he out here on a vacation?"

"No." Jan paused, but struggled on again almost immediately, "He came to be married. Perhaps you know her—a Mrs. Thwaites."

She saw the sudden amazement in Hugh's eyes.

"Not Pansy Thwaites?"

"I think that is her name. Yes." She took a sip of wine; her lips felt dry and stiff. "Do you know her, Hugh?"

Hugh laughed as if he was tolerantly amused.

"I know of her, of course, and I've seen her once or twice. Why on earth is he marrying her?"

Jan shook her head; she felt afraid to trust her voice.

Hugh was looking after Nigel with moody eyes; he was thinking of the moment when he had seen Jan in that man's arms; a little door somewhere in his brain had snapped open suddenly showing him a picture he had not wished to see a second time.

It had probably only been a shipboard flirtation and he was, no doubt, being old-fashioned in feeling any resentment, and yet, there had been something about that embrace which made a light dismissal of it impossible. Besides, Jan was not the type of girl to give her kisses where she did not love. Hugh could not remember that he had ever been permitted to kiss her, and they had always been friends.

He looked across at her with a vague uneasiness, remembering that even to-



day—the day of which he had dreamed for so long—he had not yet kissed her. Perhaps she was despising him for being a fool; possibly she would not understand the deep chivalry that had made him restrain himself at their first meeting.

She had been so obviously upset, and he had wanted so desperately to put her at her ease and give her confidence.

One never knew how to manage a woman; Heaven knew he was no expert at it. It hurt to think that a man like Nigel Pawle had so very easily succeeded where he himself was still stumbling confusedly on strange ground. Had she liked Pawle as something more than a friend that she had permitted that farewell embrace? He moved restlessly and looked at Jan again.

She was leaning back in her chair smoking a cigarette—a picture of youthful beauty and repose. There was no sign of emotion in her face; if her heartbeats had quickened during those moments when Pawle stopped at their table there was no evidence of it, and when he moved away she had not even turned her head to look after him.

Hugh Stafford realized in that moment how little he knew of this girl who was to be his wife; knew nothing of her except that they had always been good friends, and being good friends seemed to mean little enough now. They had played games together, danced together, motored together, but she had never pretended to love him, had never let him know her real self, or was there nothing to know beyond the facts that she was attractive and amusing, well dressed and very lovely?

Was it only for these things that he had loved her so faithfully? If so, they seemed a very small reason as he sat there in dumb unhappiness and perplexity, seeing only in a too poignant retrospection, the picture of a kiss given to another man and denied to him. He tried to push the thought away as un-

worthy, even while he could only remember once again that she had never professed to love him, and had told him quite frankly that if she married him he must take the risk for them both. And he had taken it gladly—had never doubted his own capability to pull the ship of each of their lives together and safely into the harbor of happiness. And now this other man with his dark face and unhappy eyes had thrown his shadow across the sunshine.

Jan rallied him lightly.

"You haven't spoken a word for quite three minutes, Hugh."

"Haven't I?" He smiled, meeting her eyes. "I have so much to think about, you see." He leaned his arms on the table, pushing glass and silver recklessly out of his way, and looked at her with almost tragic seriousness.

"Jan—if I don't make a success of this—"

She made a little grimace.

"If you don't! Why not say we? Don't I count?" she interrupted.

"It is because you count so utterly, that I know all the responsibility must be mine."

Her face softened a little.

"Hugh—you're growing up very fast. I've always thought of you as almost a boy."

"I began to 'grow up' as you call it from the moment your letter came saying you would marry me."

"Am I such a weight of responsibility?"

"You are everything."

Her eyes fell, and suddenly she felt afraid: Why had he grown so serious all at once? Had he, too, felt the shadow which Nigel Pawle's presence had cast? She remembered something Lydia Strange had once said to her before they left the ship; she had been rattling on in her superficial manner about life and little things that happened, and she had mentioned her second husband and the many quarrels between them.

"I could always feel them in the air," she said, waving her thin hand expressively. "No need for a word to be said—I could feel them in the silence like the fluttering of wings."

Was this the explanation of Hugh's sudden gravity? Had he in the silence, felt the tragic truth about herself and Pawle which she had not yet dared to tell him? Nigel had been right—they should have told him at first—at the very first moment, before another word had been spoken—before he had been allowed to take one more step into his fool's paradise. Something in her heart seemed to be saying to her: "Tell him now—it is not too late; tell him now."

Hugh broke the silence, apologetically it seemed.

"I'm a dismal idiot. Forgive me, Jan. Shall we go and sit outside. This room's very warm."

She went with him eagerly; she felt like a criminal under sentence of death who has gained another moment's respite.

In the lobby there was the bustle of a new arrival. An unnecessary-looking quantity of baggage and coats stood piled together, and the flaring headlights of a big car pierced the darkness outside.

A woman was standing at the desk talking to the manager; she had a rather shrill, compelling voice—amazingly compelling when one looked at her slight, youthful figure and the almost childish innocence of her face.

Jan thought she was very pretty; she had taken off her close-fitting hat and showed a quantity of reddish hair which obviously owed a good deal of its beauty to art, and her features were small and appealing.

"I'm terribly tired," she said. "It's been a dreadful journey. I've never done it before, and I shall never do it again, I promise you. And now I have arrived you tell me that Mr. Pawle isn't here."

The manager, who seemed very interested and attentive, answered regretfully: "Mr. Pawle went out only a few moments ago. I will send some one to find him. He cannot have gone far."

"Very well. I'll go to my room. Please have my things sent up at once, and give Mr. Pawle my message as soon as he arrives. No, he wasn't expecting me. I wanted to surprise him. I suppose I should have known better. Surprises always go wrong—they're silly things."

Jan was standing quite still, looking at the speaker. Although she had not heard her name, she knew quite well who it was before Hugh touched her arm and said in an ironical undertone:

"The bride arrives. That is Pansy Thwaites."

"Really?" Jan wondered if she had managed to get just the right amount of interest into her voice, or if it was too casual, too light. "Well, shall we go outside and have our coffee?" she asked.

They went back to the chairs on the veranda where they had sat before dinner.

There was a crescent moon and myriads of stars. Jan leaned back and stared up at them, trying not to think, not to feel.

Hugh ordered coffee and sat down beside her.

"Pawle was not to be allowed to escape, evidently," he said.

Jan turned her eyes to him.

"Escape! Why should you imagine he wishes to?" she asked sharply.

There was a surprised silence.

"I do not imagine it," Hugh answered after a moment. "I only meant that she evidently does not believe in leaving anything to chance."

Jan put her hand to her throat—it seemed a little difficult to breathe.

"I thought she was very pretty. Of course I only had a glimpse of her."

"I believe she is very much admired by some men."

Jan tried to laugh lightly. "From the tone of your voice, evidently not by you."

"No," he replied gruffly.

Across the moonlit garden Jan saw Nigel Pawle walking hurriedly toward the hotel. They had found him, then, and brought him back. Jan closed her eyes.

He was walking quickly—no doubt in a hurry to see the woman who was wait-

ing for him; no doubt he would kiss her.

Jan had never known what jealousy really was until that moment; and yet—was she not to blame? Had not Nigel begged her to tell Hugh Stafford the truth, or to allow him to tell it for her?

Pawle went on, unseeing past them, and into the hotel.

Hugh said, "Shall I pour coffee, or will you?" and Jan opened her eyes.



*"I do love you, but you must wait. You say I am cruel to you, but you don't realize how cruel you are trying to make me to another man."*

"Oh, you, please—I feel so deliciously lazy."

It was all so stiff and unreal; she felt as if she was watching a scene in a badly written play, of which one could only think how unnatural and foolish all the characters were—how unlike reality; and yet it was reality—stark reality.

They would be together now, Nigel and Pansy Thwaites; no doubt he had gone upstairs to her room, and would take her in his arms.

With a desperate feeling that she must get away from her thoughts Jan broke into speech:

"You're very quiet. I thought you'd be much more excited to see me. Say something, Hugh!"

"It's because I want to say so much that I can't say anything," he said humbly.

She laughed at that.

"You're growing quite poetical. I hardly know you."

"Is that how you feel? I've been feeling the same about you all the evening."

Jan looked at him quickly. "What do you mean?"

"That I really hardly know you at all."

He was stirring his coffee absently; the spoon made a little tinkling sound against the cup, and Jan listened to it, wondering what she could say, what she ought to say.

Supposing she suddenly grew very brave and said:

"I can't go on. I must tell you the truth. I love Nigel—I'm going to marry him. We agreed to tell you as soon as we landed. He is going to tell Mrs. Thwaites, too. I expect he is telling her now, at this very moment."

"Is he?" Jealousy prompted the question, whispering insidiously in her ear. "Isn't he much more likely to be kissing her, and putting off telling the truth—just as you are putting it off?"

The little tinkling sound of silver on

china stopped, and Jan's taut nerves relaxed.

"We have a long time before us, Hugh," she said. "We shall soon get to know all about each other."

He put down his cup and stood up.

"Come and walk. I can't talk to you here."

She shrank back in her chair.

"I'm tired. Must we to-night? There is to-morrow, and all the other to-morrows," she begged.

She saw the sudden passionate eagerness die out of his face and after a moment he said quietly:

"I'm sorry. Of course you're tired. We'll do anything you like."

And all the time his heart was furiously accusing him:

"This is all wrong. This is not how things should be. This is not what you have looked forward to for so long. What are you afraid of? Play the man and the master—as that other man did."

And Hugh answered his own heart, "But I am not the other man."

Groping in the dark, on strange ground, that was what he was doing; groping in the dark for a dream that to-day should have become reality, held to his heart; a dream that was evading him and slowly forcing him to wake up.

He said suddenly, rather pathetically, trying to laugh:

"You must forgive me. I'll be different to-morrow. I'm rather knocked off my perch to-night."

And then, as with sudden kindness and remorse she touched his hand, he caught it in a grip that hurt and stammered, "I love you so—I love you so."

When she was alone in her room, Jan felt that the whole day had been nothing. To-morrow morning when she woke up—if indeed she could ever sleep—she would find herself still on the boat—still with some hours between her and the moment when she must face Hugh Stafford. She could not believe that she

had already faced him, and been beaten by him; she could not realize that the long voyage was over and that she was here in a strange country.

She drew aside the shade and looked out at the moonlight on the sea. This was Africa—and New York was away over there—somewhere. The same moon shone down on it and on the old roofs of Long Barn—the same moon, and yet she was all these thousands of miles away—an exile. It was nearly midnight, but she made no attempt to undress. Hugh had been gone more than an hour—he had said good night to her as he might have done to a friend—downstairs, just holding her hand for a moment.

What would she have done had he kissed her? As she turned away from him alone, Jan had found herself wishing in a forlorn, lonely way, that he had done so. It would have been something to hold onto if he had been more loving, more passionately glad to see her. She was not in the frame of mind to realize the great self-constraint he had put upon himself all day, or to appreciate it. She felt lonely and unhappy.

And somewhere beneath the same roof, Pansy Thwaites and Nigel both slept, or lay awake.

What had he said to her? Jan wondered. Nothing probably. Perhaps at the moment when he should have spoken, he had turned coward even as she herself had done; perhaps neither of them would ever find the courage to do the thing they had sworn to do.

Every time she heard a step in the corridor outside, Jan stood still and held her breath.

Perhaps Nigel would come to her—but the steps always passed on.

She took off her gown and slipped into a negligee. Sleep was miles away—she felt that she would never be able to close her eyes again.

She stood for a long time looking out at the moonlight. The world was very

still, as if she was left in it quite alone, and forgotten. The man she loved, and the man who loved her, both seemed so far away. Suddenly she felt the tears on her cheeks. It was so different to what she had expected; and yet—what right had she to expect anything?

She was a coward—afraid to face the truth, even though it was the only road to happiness.

What would her dear old dad have said? "Don't be afraid—it's all in the day's march."

She could almost feel the grip of his hand on her shoulder, giving her courage.

For a moment she closed her eyes, trying to conjure his face, with its cheery optimistic grin.

Some one tapped softly on the door behind her.

She turned slowly around, her pulses racing, the tears wet on her cheeks. Nigel!

As she held her breath, listening, everything else was forgotten. In a moment the man she loved would be with her—she would know once more the comfort of his arms, the passionate joy of his kisses.

The subdued knocking came again, and, shaking in every limb, Jan stole across the room and opened the door.

There was a tragic silence, then Hugh Stafford said hoarsely:

"I had to come back. I couldn't go. I must kiss you, Jan! I must!"

He was in the room and had closed the door behind him.

"It's been like a dream all day, but I'm awake now. I had to come back and tell you how much I love you. Kiss me, my dear. If you only knew how I've longed to kiss you."

When he took her in his arms she offered no resistance, but she closed her eyes before the love in his, and her lips were hard and unyielding.

It was fate, she told herself wildly; fate and this man had beaten her!

Her dad might be right about all things being in the day's march, but he had forgotten to tell her how long—how many weary miles long—a day's march can be.

Hugh was kissing her and whispering passionate words against her lips.

"I love you—I'll make you so happy. My wife—my beloved wife—my own darling!"

"Hugh." She thought she spoke his name, but if her lips moved no sound came; she thought she tried to push him away, but there was no strength in her arms, and the room was slipping from her, and she was falling, falling into limitless space in spite of the strong arms that held her, and then suddenly everything seemed to crash with her into unconsciousness.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Lena Cunningham leaned back in her low chair and looked at Jan with an odd sort of reminiscent sentimentality in her kind eyes.

"I could almost find it in my heart to wish you were going to be married in a real wedding dress, after all," she said.

She fanned her flushed face with a newspaper from which she had just been reading bits of gossip aloud.

"They would have given you a whole column in the *Argosy*," she went on with a touch of maliciousness, "and they would have described everything utterly incorrectly and all the reporters would have enjoyed themselves immensely, but as it is—sneaking off in the dawn, as you are going to——"

"Oh, not sneaking," Jan interrupted with a smile. "And Hugh hates the idea of a crowd as much as I do."

"You mean that Hugh hates the idea of it only because you do; you know whatever you say is all right for him."

"Is it?" There was a touch of irony in Jan's voice, and she got up from the

long couch where she had been resting and went over to the window.

Lena's house stood rather high, with a beautiful view of the bay from most of its windows, and just now the calm face of the sea was dyed with a glorious medley of colors from the sunset.

Jan had been in South Africa two weeks. Sometimes she asked herself if she had ever lived anywhere else, even while she could not yet rid herself of the strange feeling that she did not really belong here at all, that she was just passing through, and that soon she would find herself back at her home on Long Island.

To-morrow was Jan's wedding day. She was to be married at eight o'clock in the morning in an ordinary summer dress, without a bridesmaid, or a wedding breakfast, or a wedding bell—and she was to be married to Hugh Stafford!

A week ago she had given up her rooms at the hotel and come to stay with Lena Cunningham, and to-morrow, right after the ceremony—Jan could find no better word in her mind—she and Hugh were to take a mail train for Johannesburg.

"And that's all," she told herself with a flat sense of nothingness, as she stood looking at the sunset and listening to the little crackle of the newspaper as Lena slowly waved it to and fro, fanning her flushed face.

For the last week the weather had been intensely hot, with a dry wind that had seemed to raise every speck of dust from every corner of every street and fling it wildly about.

"It will be cooler in Johannesburg," every one promised her. "It's so much higher up. You'll love Johannesburg."

If Jan had only dared to say so, she would far rather have remained where she was—in Lena's house. She liked Lena. Although she was still in the early thirties, there was a comfortable motherliness about Lena which Jan found

soothing. Lena had lived sufficiently long in South Africa to have conquered her homesickness.

"Eighteen years," she told Jan dryly among a host of other confidences. "I came out when I was eighteen—violently in love with Joe, and with my mind fully made up that South Africa was going to be a sort of endless fairy-story place where the sun never ceased shining, and where life was one glad sweet song."

"And was it?" Jan inquired.

Lena laughed.

"It seems absurd now," she admitted. "When I look back on the first few months I feel intensely sorry for poor Joe. I am sure that for twelve months I cried nearly all day and every day. The natives terrified me. Then Wendy was born and things improved. For one thing she was delicate and we hadn't enough money for me to go home, so it was no use crying to go. Then Paddy was born, and then Joe began to get on, and we bought a car, and then after five years we all went home for six months."

"Well?" Jan questioned, as she broke off.

"And then," Lena admitted reluctantly, "I realized that my roots had been torn out of American soil and firmly refused to be replanted. New York gave me a headache, and the servant question nearly drove me mad, Wendy got whooping cough and nearly died—everything was so expensive, and when we got safely back here again I said, 'Never no more,' or words to that effect, and I've never been home since."

"I can't imagine I shall ever feel that way," Jan said slowly.

"Wait till you've settled down, and get your own home," Lena said practically. "It makes all the difference in the world."

And now the first step toward that settling down was at hand, for to-morrow Jan was to be married to Hugh

Stafford, without fuss, without ceremony, without even Kitty and Dora Fairlie as bridesmaids.

Jan smiled as she thought of the two girls. They had come to say good-by to her the previous day, full of lamentations.

"Not a real wedding! Oh, what a shame! You'd have made such a beautiful bride. I should have thought Mr. Stafford would have insisted! Think how gorgeous it would be to have photographs of yourself in your wedding dress to look back upon and remember it by!"

It seemed a very youthful and illogical argument to Jan, and besides she was not at all sure that she wanted anything by which to remember this day which was rushing upon her so rapidly that she could hardly think.

Lena rose to her feet regretfully.

"Well, I suppose it's time we changed—Hugh and the others will be here before we are dressed if we're not quick."

"Who else is coming?" Jan asked absently.

She had heard the names of those who were coming to dinner half a dozen times already, but they had not conveyed much to her.

Lena repeated them patiently.

"Only the Desmonds and the Smythes, and John Francis—just the people Hugh likes best." She looked at Jan's listless figure, and moved by a sudden impulse she crossed the room and put an arm around her.

"You're going to be very happy," she said. "I can feel it in my bones."

"Can you? Well, you've been a dear to me anyway."

Lena laughed a little self-consciously.

"In the first place I confess it was all for Hugh's sake," she said frankly. "I love Hugh in the sort of way I should love him if he were my brother; but now I know you so well—it's for your sake, too."

"That's kind of you. I've never had



*His eyes never left her face; he lifted his glass and toasted her.  
"To the future and to our happiness together."*

many women friends. I don't think women really like me as a rule."

"Well, I do," Lena declared. "You and Hugh are the luckiest people I know."

"Luckiest?"

"To be so well suited," Lena explained. "Of course I adore my Joe, and we're perfectly happy, but all the





*Loustane Burren Bailey*

same—well—I can't explain what I mean. Perhaps it's always different when you have been married to a man for eighteen years and know just how cross he can get when his breakfast is ten minutes late. Well, I must fly."

She shut the door behind her and Jan turned away from the window and began to take off her linen sports dress.

This was the last night that she would belong to herself—to-morrow morning at a preposterously early hour the girl known as Jan Wyndham would cease to exist, and in her place there would be

a queer creature who was Hugh Stafford's wife.

She slipped out of her dress and began brushing her hair. Hugh was a dear; she was conscious of a curious regret and softening at her heart every time she thought of him, but all the same— The brush fell from her

hand and she sat down, staring at herself in the dressing-table mirror.

There was nothing of the radiant bride about her, she thought cynically. Tired eyes with dark shadows beneath them stared back at her from a pale face—a face that had grown thinner during the last two weeks—'older,' Jan told herself with a sort of bitter satisfaction. Her thoughts went back to the night of her arrival, and a little shiver swept through her body.

So many times she had relived that moment when Hugh's gentle knock came on her door and she had opened it so eagerly, expecting to find Nigel there. It seemed years since she had tried to push Hugh away. And now—to-morrow—they were to be married after all! After all—what? Well, after all her strong determination never to marry him—her strong determination to tell him that she loved another man.

Perhaps it had never been so strong as she had imagined—perhaps she had always been half-hearted, a coward.

Anyway, it was too late now, and, even if it were not, Nigel Pawle had gone from her forever.

She had only seen him once since that night in the dining room at the hotel when he had paused for a moment at their table; only once—the following morning when she had come face to face with him and Pansy Thwaites in the hotel garden.

Pansy had been clinging to his arm, and from sheer bravado Jan had forced herself to stop and speak, and Nigel had introduced them.

"Miss Wyndham—Mrs. Thwaites."

Pansy had gushed.

"I've heard all about you. The papers have printed literally dozens of your photographs, and I must say that none of them really do you justice. What do you say, Nigel?" She had looked up at him with her carefully made-up eyes, and the innocent expression for which she was famous.

"I haven't seen the photographs," Nigel said.

There was a curiously cold, closed-up look about his face, and Jan had been conscious of something, she had not known what, but something fateful and irrevocable—final!

"I do so wonder how you will like South Africa," Pansy had rattled on. "Of course I adore it, but people are different. It takes so much getting used to after the States, but then I've always lived abroad——"

"India—wasn't it?" Jan interrupted to ask.

Pansy laughed. "I suppose Nigel told you—of course you traveled on the same boat. I hope he behaved himself, Miss Wyndham. I know what dreadful places for flirtations boats can be."

"As far as I know he behaved himself admirably," Jan said calmly. "We had a most uneventful voyage."

"And both of you coming out to be married! Quite romantic, wasn't it, Nigel?"

He nodded his head slowly.

"Most romantic."

Jan made a little movement to go on then, and Mrs. Thwaites said:

"I do hope we shall meet again. Africa is a very small place when it comes to meeting people—they turn up in the oddest corners. I shan't say good-bye, even though we are leaving this afternoon."

As she sat staring at her pale face in the mirror Jan experienced once more the terrible shock that had seemed to shake her heart at Pansy Thwaite's casual words.

Leaving this afternoon! For a moment she had seemed to lose her breath—to feel almost faint, stupid. Then Nigel had spoken:

"Yes, it will be *au revoir* for the present, I am afraid."

She had met his eyes quietly, without sign of emotion; she believed they had then shaken hands, and then she had

gone on—forcing her steps one at a time by sheer will power.

And she had not seen a sign of him nor heard from him since.

All the rest of that morning she had waited for him to come to her—waited for a message—a note. But there had been no sign; and later, about four o'clock she supposed it was, she had seen him and Mrs. Thwaites drive away together.

And so for the second time he had shamed her, humiliated her—left her! It was two weeks ago now, but no sign had come from him—he had just gone—walked out of her life. She had tried to hate him and despise him, and she had tried to defend him and to find some explanation of his conduct.

He must have written to her, and she had not received the letter. Perhaps even Pansy herself had intercepted it, or perhaps Pansy had, after all, refused to let him go—insisted that he keep his promise of marriage. Even then, he could have told her, could have explained; but, no, he had just left her—a suffering, humiliated thing.

But for Hugh Stafford she often thought she would have died; she had clung to him as a drowning person clings to a raft; she had kept him with her for every possible moment, terrified of being alone, of being left to her thoughts.

Once, driven almost to desperation, she had gone to the manager of the hotel and asked, casually she hoped, if there had been any letter or message that might have miscarried.

But of course there was none! Pawle had just left her to suffer again as he had done that time in Aiken. Jan was no coward, and little by little pride came to her aid. If he did not care, then neither would she. If he could throw her love in her face, she would laugh in reply. She would marry Hugh and be happy!

Happy! Was there any happiness in the whole world? she asked herself hysterically. She closed her eyes and clenched her hands, as the wave of unassuaged agony swept over her once more. Nigel had run off and left her and to-morrow was her wedding day!

TO BE CONTINUED.





# An Old-fashioned Girl

By Marjorie Gleyre

JACQUELINE did not mean to listen, but the person sitting in front of her on the street car had raised her voice so as to be heard above the noise, and Jacq could not really help herself.

"She's a nice little thing," the lady was saying to her companion. "Not so aggressively modern as most of these girls. The real old-fashioned type, you know—and that's rare in these days when even babes seem to smoke and drink and swear."

Jacq was mildly interested at the description, and thought the girl might be worth knowing.

"I thoroughly approve of her. And I told Alec so. I said: 'Why don't you ask Jacqueline Barr to marry you?' And he said: 'Very well, mother, if you wish it.' Alec is a dutiful son."

So she herself was the "old-fashioned girl," and the speaker was Alec's mother! She should have recognized Mrs. Conquest's angular, positive back and self-complacent voice. "'Very well, mother, if you wish it,'" she repeated to herself furiously. So Alec was courting her to please his mother! And she had flattered herself that he was falling under her spell, that her dark hair and blue eyes under their shade of thick black lashes had captivated him!

But catch her accepting a man who was tame enough to propose because of his mother's choice! She planned her rejection—the words, the tone, the look to accompany them. "I'm sorry, Alec, but I simply don't love you."

And then she realized that she simply

did love him, and wanted him mother or not. His slim, well-groomed figure, inconspicuous good looks, and pleasant, deliberate manner had endeared him to her in the few months that she had known him, and she could not bear the thought of losing him. So she decided that if he proposed she would accept him, but before she got through he would want her not because his mother thought she was a nice old-fashioned girl, but because he himself loved her no matter what kind of girl she was. That "old-fashioned" rankled. Jacq had rather prided herself on being conservative, but to be called old-fashioned was quite a different matter.

The proposal came sooner than she had anticipated. One day Mrs. Conquest called her up to ask if she would come over to play bridge as her sister was there and they needed a fourth. Alec called for her in the car. As they drew up in front of his house he suddenly blurted:

"Say, Jacq, don't you think we hit it off well together?"

"What's that—a proposal?" she inquired staring curiously at him.

"'Atta girl!" he admitted, grinning sheepishly.

"Are you serious?" she persisted, trying to wring some sign of feeling from him.

"Absolutely."

She heaved an inward sigh. Alas for romance! It might as well have been an invitation to dinner. Dutiful son! But give her time; she'd fix him. She snuggled over against his arm and dropped her head on his shoulder.

"Oh, Alec!" she murmured.

He put an arm around her awkwardly. "Mother will be so pleased!" he said.

"But I'm not marrying your mother!" she objected, and held her face up for a kiss.

He cleared his throat, then bent and brushed her lips with his quickly.

Jacqueline got out of the car, burning with mortification. Such a kiss! She supposed he had done that to please his mother, too! Right then and there she decided to give mother some bad moments that very evening. Now that she and Alec were engaged she could start her campaign of shocking mother and winning Alec. Only she must be careful to get Alec thoroughly enslaved before mother tried to make him break the engagement!

When they went into the house, Alec grasped Jacq's hand. As they entered the living room he announced triumphantly: "We're engaged, mother!"

"How nice, how very nice!" exclaimed Mrs. Conquest in utter satisfaction. She extended a heavily ringed hand toward Jacq. "Come and let me kiss you, my dear."

Jacq obediently trotted across the room and bent to receive a clammy impression on her left cheek.

"How very nice!" repeated Mrs. Conquest beaming on Alec, who stood by with a what-a-good-boy-am-I expression.

"Well, let's play," suggested Jacq, when she could endure it no longer.

They took seats at the card table, and Alec took out his cigarettes.

"May I?" said Jacq, reaching over to help herself.

Alec stared with an open mouth, and Mrs. Conquest said in a surprised tone: "I didn't know you smoked. I've never seen you do it before."

Jacq raised her eyebrows in feigned astonishment. "Of course I smoke. If you don't smoke nowadays you're a back number."

"But I thought you were different," Mrs. Conquest rebuked.

Jacq put the cigarette between her much-rouged lips and puffed at it contentedly. She had made a good start. She had not expected to create such a commotion with such a simple thing as

a cigarette. She was glad she had recently learned to smoke.

"What are the stakes?" she asked as Mrs. Conquest dealt.

"Stakes!" Her voice rose in horror. "We never play for money!"

"Why not? It makes it more exciting."

"But that would be gambling!" Mrs. Conquest laid her palm down on the table with a firm slap. "I won't countenance it in my house!"

"You don't know what you miss," said Jacq engagingly, pleased with her easy success. "Now when we play poker the sky's the limit——"

"You don't play poker, Jacqueline—you don't!" gasped the poor lady.

"Of course. Every one does. And strip poker is a riot——"

"Let's play bridge!" interrupted Alec hastily, lest his mother ask what strip poker was.

Jacq, giggling to herself at the thought of strip poker because she did not play any kind of poker, noted that Alec seemed to be taking a new interest in her. She was not sure if it was favorable interest, but interest of any kind was an improvement!

When it was time to go home she said good-by with an airy wave of the hand, and left the room with Alec. At the door she asked him in a tone raised to reach the ears of Mrs. Conquest: "Got anything on your hip, Alec?" She heard a gasp from the room behind her, and then Mrs. Conquest's voice calling peremptorily: "Alec!" He excused himself to go to see what she wanted, and reappeared somewhat chastened. As soon as they got outside, he said:

"Say, Jacq, you shocked mother. I didn't know you drank, either."

"We weren't engaged before," she explained glibly. "I don't need to have any secrets from you now, do I?"

"No. But if you must drink, don't speak of it in front of mother."

"Do you disapprove?" she asked.

"Well, I—er—well, I suppose some girls do drink."

Jacq saw that he did disapprove, but was afraid to say so lest he offend her. So he wanted to stand well with her, regardless of his mother's objections! Maybe he would have proposed to her himself in time, if his mother had not rushed him! But she intended to test him further and see if his love would be stronger than his disapproval. Then she could be sure that it was not going to be a mother-made match.

He kissed her at her door. It was not much of a kiss, but at least it was better than the one that had sealed their engagement. "He's improving already," Jacq congratulated herself.

In the next few weeks Jacqueline led her harassed fiancé a merry chase. She had taken up with a rather gay crowd, so that she could pretend to Alec that they were her regular associates. She acted as sophisticated as the best of them, but she never went to extremes, and always she made herself as attractive as she could. When she was alone with Alec she was the most adoring and adorable of sweethearts, and he was obviously becoming more captivated every day—though more worried.

After one rather wild party he was induced to remonstrate.

"Say, Jacq, you're certainly hitting the high spots, and that bunch you play around with is pretty fast."

"See here, Alec, no remarks about my friends, please," she warned pleasantly.

"Well, mother's having fits! She said if she'd known you were this kind of girl——"

"What kind of girl?" she snapped.

"Oh, I didn't mean anything. You needn't take me up like that. I just meant that mother wouldn't have——" He stopped short, realizing that he had made a break.

"Wouldn't have what?" Jacq demanded, fixing him with a cold stare.

"Oh, nothing." He backed out nervously.

"Alexander Conquest, what were you going to say?"

"Nothing. Only mother isn't so keen on my marrying you now."

"What of it?" she challenged. Then she put a persuasive hand on his shoulder. "How do you feel about it, Alec?"

He surprised her with a sudden warm embrace, followed by a kiss that was the most thrilling one Jacq had ever experienced!

"That's how I feel about it," he declared. "You're such a dear, Jacq—I'm crazy about you. I love you more and more every day, only——"

"Only what?" she asked, disappointed. She supposed he was going to refer to his mother's judgment again.

"Never mind," he replied and smothered her further questions with another wonderful kiss.

If it had not been for that "only" Jacqueline might have given up her pretense. She was getting heartily sick of it, and was only waiting for Mrs. Conquest to make her objections sufficiently strong so that Alec would have to act for himself. She had thought the time was at hand to-night when Alec had started to say how he loved her; then he had spoiled it all. So the game would have to go on for a while.

On Jacqueline's birthday Alec had invited her to dinner and the theater. They had a lovely evening—the dinner was good, the show was good, and Alec was perfect. But he acted as if he had something on his mind. Jacq couldn't quite make it out. He was as attentive as he could be, but just a bit distraught.

After the theater they got in the car for the homeward drive. Jacq cuddled down as close to him as she could get without disturbing his driving and discussed the play and the players, until their environment made her suddenly sit up and look around. They were on

the outskirts of town, far from her house.

"Why, Alec!" she cried, surprised. "Where on earth are you driving? I thought we were going right home."

"I—I—why, I'm abducting you," he said lamely.

"Don't be silly. Where are you driving?" She was annoyed with him.

"We're taking a joy ride, that's all," he offered, driving on.

She stared at him trying to make it out. "I want to go home," she said firmly, "I'm tired."

"We're going to Bill Ryan's!"

She jumped as if shot. Bill Ryan's was the most notorious road house near town! What could have happened to Alec? That he should be taking her to Bill Ryan's was incomprehensible, unless—— Color flooded her face at the mere thought. Perhaps he thought she was as wild as she had tried to make him think—he thought this was the sort of thing she liked! Her little pretense had succeeded beyond her wildest dreams, and it was rebounding to hurt herself.

"Alec," she said in a trembling voice.

"I don't want to go to Bill Ryan's."

"Don't spoil my party," he begged. "This is a birthday surprise."

"I don't care for it." Her voice became firmer. "I don't want to go there, and you ought to know better than to take me!"

"Wait and see."

"I won't wait and see!" she burst out, furious that Alec should persist in spite of her objections. It was bad enough of him to suggest it, but not to honor her wishes in the matter was too much. She looked at him and saw that his chin was set obstinately and he was driving on with evident determination. She reached for the door. "If you don't stop and turn around," she threatened, "I'll jump out."

The car came to a stop with a terrific jerk and squeaking of brakes, Alec

turned in his seat and grabbed her by the shoulders, looking deep into her misted eyes.

"See here, Jacq," he demanded, "do you mean to say that you don't trust me?"

Those words sounded reassuring somehow, but she answered: "I won't go to Bill Ryan's with any one."

"And you really thought I'd take you—the girl I love—there?"

"You said so yourself," she retorted.

"I was fooling at first—then I was angry to think you didn't trust me any better than that. And even if I had been taking you there you should have been willing to go—with me."

"Where were you going then?" she challenged, partly mollified.

"I suppose I'll have to tell you before you'll have enough faith in me to come with me," he said bitterly. "I was taking you out to Martha Lowering's to a special birthday surprise party!"

*Alec slunk over to kneel beside Jacq and put a protecting arm about her. She grabbed hold of his hand and hung on tightly, waiting for judgment to be pronounced.*





"Oh!" It was a very subdued voice that said that.

"And may I ask you please to act surprised when you get there, so as not to spoil the fun?"

After saying that in a distant manner he pushed her gently back in the seat and turned his attention to the wheel.

Despite the jollity of Martha Lowering's surprise party Jacqueline's spirits were entirely dampened. It was all she could do to act natural and gay. Alec

give herself, so how could she expect him to forgive her? It was all over now, she supposed; he was angry enough to break their engagement, so she had better break it herself before he got the chance.

On the way home, she slipped the ring off her finger and offered it to him with the tentative remark: "I suppose it's all off now."

"What?" he said, surprised, and when he saw what she had done he put the ring right back in its place. "Of course it's not all off. Haven't I told you I love you? Well, that stands. Only I'll never feel that I have your trust again. I'll always remember to-night, and I'll be afraid that you'll doubt me on the slightest provocation."

"Oh, Alec!"

Jacqueline buried her face in his coat collar, and sobbed, and said that she would trust him anywhere. And he kissed her and hugged her, but he wouldn't take it back. He was quite sure she loved him, but he was equally sure she didn't really trust him. Hadn't she shown that plainly to-night?

"I do trust you, and I'll prove it," she declared vehemently, over and over again.

Two days later, or more exactly just before daybreak on the second day, a dark figure vaguely suggestive in contour and size of Jacqueline Barr, climbed out of the second-story window of the house next to Conquest's, and in through the second-story window of the Conquest house.

"Quite simple!" said Jacq to herself, having accomplished the feat.

Then she picked her way through the dark hall to Alec's room and let herself in. When she fell over a chair she heard him stir, so she snapped on the light boldly.

"Jacqueline!" he exclaimed unbelievably, and rubbed his eyes as if to clear his vision.



avoided her, and she assumed that he was very angry with her for her suspicions. Why had she doubted him—Alec of all people! She could not for-

"Good morning," she said composedly, though she felt herself blushing. "Now that you're aware of my presence you may go to sleep again." She slipped off her coat and dropped into his armchair. "I'll sit here and read if the light won't bother you. I'm leaving just before breakfast."

"What's the big idea?" He was sure it was Jacqueline now, but he thought she must be crazy.

She didn't answer, but adjusted herself comfortably and picked up a book from the table. Then she said approvingly: "You look attractive with your hair mussed up like that, Alec."

He put a self-conscious hand to his head and tried to flatten the tumbled locks. "How did you get in?" he demanded.

"A mere trifle to one of my ability," she replied flippantly to cover her increasing nervousness. She simply had to carry this through. "I'm spending the night with my friend who lives next door—"

"Then for Heaven's sake go and spend it there!"

"I got out of the window of her house and along the ledge to yours and into your library window—the window that has a broken lock. You really should have that attended to, Alec; any burglar could get in as easily as I did."

He still stared at her.

"But why did you come?"

She hesitated, then blurted it out: "Just to show you that I trust you."

He stared at her incredulously. "You little fool!" he said finally. "Go right back. What do you think people would say if they knew you were here?"

"Fool, yourself!" she retorted pleasantly. "Who's going to know it but you?" She opened her book with a pretense of closing the conversation. "Now go to sleep and don't bother me," she advised.

"But you can't stay here. Go on—get out."

"Are you speaking to me or do you wish to?"

"What if mother found you here? She's getting more and more insistent that I break off the engagement! Please go, Jacq."

"Not yet. I came here to prove that I have implicit faith in you and I intend to do it."

"Very well. If you won't go, I will."

He threw back the covers, but before he could get even one foot out of bed Jacq had danced to the door and planted her back against it dramatically. In the manner of the movie villain trapping the pretty young thing, she declaimed: "No, my dear. Nothing doing." Putting her hand behind her she locked the door with a neat turn of the wrist and held the key aloft triumphantly. "You are trapped," she cried.

Alec, laughing in spite of himself at the ridiculous burlesque, hopped out of bed evidently intending to get possession of the key, and save Jacqueline's reputation in spite of her. But she had ideas of her own. Flitting airily past him to the window, she tossed the key out.

"There! That's settled."

"Jacqueline!" His voice rose in horrified protest. "Do you realize what you've done? Now you can't get out!"

"Well, you said you'd never feel that I trusted you," she said, sobering, "and I wanted to show you. That's all."

"I appreciate that, dear. But you've taken a most ridiculous and dangerous way to show it."

He went to the window and stuck his head out, peering into the darkness below in a vain attempt to see the key. An imperative knock on the door brought his head in so suddenly that it got a wicked crack on the window frame.

"Alexander, what does this noise mean?" It was Mrs. Conquest's voice and it sounded decidedly militant. She

rattled the doorknob. "Why is the door locked? You never lock it."

"I—why—yes, it's locked," stammered Alec, signaling Jacq to keep quiet.

"And it seems to me as if you were talking to some one. Of course that couldn't be so, but that's the way it seemed. Open the door at once, Alec."

"I—I—can't!"

"Why not?"

"I haven't the key."

"Haven't the key? Are you crazy? Where is the key?"

"It's in the yard. It—er—it dropped out of the window."

"How could it drop out of the window?"

Jacq whispered in Alec's ear: "Sleepwalking,"

and he accepted the cue gratefully.

"Why, I was walking in my sleep, mother."

"You've never walked in your sleep before!"

"And I locked the door and just as I dropped the key out of the window I bumped my head and woke up—and you were knocking on the door. That's all I know about it."

Jacq patted his arm approvingly at the story, but he was moist from the exertion.

"And you were talking in your sleep, too? Very well. Go back to bed. I'll get the key for you."

"Don't bother, mother," he begged, but she had already gone. He turned to Jacq with tragic eyes. "She'll find you here," he moaned.

"I'll hide," she said bravely, though her heart was beating madly. She looked around the room. "Why, there's

no closet!" she gasped, dismayed. "What'll she say when she sees me?" She gave a nervous little giggle.

"It's nothing to laugh at," he groaned. "She'll do something drastic. I wouldn't put it past her to stop our marriage one way or another. You don't know her."

The sound of steps in the hall put an end to the conversation, and for a moment they stood

petrified with fright. Then Jacq sprang to action. Quickly but quietly she crawled under the bed and jerked the covers down over the side to hide her; then she peeked out to motion Alec to sit on the bed to further conceal her. While he obeyed the key was pushed into the lock and turned.



Just as the door burst open to admit Mrs. Conquest, Alec saw Jacq's coat lying on the chair. His eyes popped with horror, but he quickly averted his gaze lest he draw his mother's attention to the revelation.

Mrs. Conquest stood clutching an incongruous ostrich-feather-trimmed negligee around her bony figure, and stared penetratingly at her son.

"You've never walked in your sleep before," she said, shaking her head distrustfully.

"There's got to be a first time," he muttered sulkily.

At that there was a tiny snort from beneath the bed from Jacq, whose amusement at Alec's remark could not be entirely smothered.

"What's that?" cried Mrs. Conquest, thrusting her head forward to listen intently.

"Oh, say, mother, go on off and let

a man sleep," besought Alec hastily, praying his mother would go.

Mrs. Conquest, still in a listening attitude, let her eyes rove slowly around the room. They lighted on Jacq's coat and lingered.

"What's that?" she asked in amazement.

For a moment she stood staring at it; then she stalked across the room and grabbed it up, shaking it out violently. Alec turned pale, but colored again as Jacq scratched his heel meaningly.

"What's this doing here?" Mrs. Conquest bit off each word ominously.

"It's—it's——" stuttered Alec, but things were quite beyond his powers of invention.

His mother threw a quick glance about the room, and then swept over to the bed.

"Come out!" she commanded, without deigning to stoop to look under it. "You—you—terrible girl!" she upbraided, her face livid with rage, as a much-subdued Jacq crawled out.

Jacq sat on the floor at her feet, too crestfallen to attempt to rise. All her buoyancy had evaporated, leaving her frightened and apprehensive. Now she had done it! What a mess she had gotten herself into, all because of her pretending to be something she wasn't! Suppose Mrs. Conquest prevented their marriage? She certainly looked bent on wreaking vengeance as she towered above the trembling girl. Tears came to Jacq's eyes. How could she bear to lose Alec now, when she had grown to love him so much more than ever! She tried to think of something to say to smooth out the situation, but not a thought came to her.

"Well, what have you to say for yourself?" demanded Mrs. Conquest.

Alec slunk over to kneel beside Jacq and put a protecting arm about her. She grabbed hold of his hand and hung on tightly, waiting for judgment to be pronounced.

For a long moment Mrs. Conquest stood glaring balefully at her. Finally a shiver swept through her rigid figure. She threw up her hands despairingly and wailed:

"Now you'll have to marry her!" Then she delivered her final ultimatum: "And you'll stay to breakfast—because I don't care to risk having any one see you leaving the house at such an hour as this!"

With that she turned and strode haughtily away. Jacq stared after her with open mouth, hardly daring to believe that Mrs. Conquest was insisting on their marriage instead of trying to break it off. Alec rose, stretched, and shook himself energetically as if to shake off unpleasantness. She followed suit. When he sank onto the edge of the bed, she sat beside him. But just as he put his arm around her, she was struck by a dire thought, and quite unexpectedly—even to herself—she began to cry.

"What's the matter?" he queried, patting her back comfortingly. "Everything's all right now, dear."

"No, it isn't!" she choked through sobs.

"Why isn't it?"

"I'm—really rather—old-fashioned," she faltered.

He looked down at her and shook his head soberly as if he thought the excitement had unbalanced her a little.

"It's all right, dear," he soothed, "you don't act old-fashioned. In fact, you act pretty gay and modern!"

"That's just it," she agreed, looking up at him mournfully. "It's all acting. And I'm so tired of it—I can't go on, Alec; I simply can't—not even to keep your love."

"Keep my love?" he repeated in astonishment.

"You didn't really love me until I began to act wild—so I suppose you won't love me now that you know I'm not really wild."

"Dearest!" he cried in a voice rich with relief. "That's the best news I've ever heard. My one misgiving has been about your wildness!"

"But you only began to love me when I began to act wild," she said wonderingly.

"No. That was when I woke up to how much I had loved you before. When I saw how wild you were it brought it home to me how much I loved you when I thought you were more conservative. And the wilder you got the more I showed my love, I suppose because I thought you would need it more. You needed my protection to save you from yourself—or so I thought. I was terribly worried wondering whether I could ever reform you!"

"Oh, Alec!" Her tears had turned to laughter. "I'm so glad I can be myself and still be loved by you."

"Loved a hundred times more!" he exclaimed. His lips brushed over her fragrant hair, paused a moment on her smooth brow, then jumped impatiently to meet her eager lips.

That kiss was the most thrilling one Jacqueline had ever known. It seemed

to flood all the secret places of her heart with love. She trembled in his arms, and her lips clung to his for a long moment.

"You dear wonderful girl!" He held her tightly and gazed down at her as though he could never take his adoring eyes from her face. "Mother'll love you when she hears you're really old-fashioned. In fact I'm sure nobody could help loving you, darling. I love you to distraction!"

His arms about her, his eyes resting on her flushed happy face, his lips so close to hers, all told Jacqueline how much he cared for her.

"And you're sure even your mother will approve of me?" she asked mischievously, yet with a tender little note in her voice. "She approved at first, you know, dear. I was her choice."

"But you're mine now!" He swept her close to him, and his lips found hers for a long rapturous moment. "Marry me to-day, sweetheart. I want you so much! Give me your answer!"

"Oh—yes!" And Jacqueline, nestling deep in his arms, lifted her lips for the kiss that would seal their love forever.



### WHEN YOU'RE AWAY

THE hours follow each other  
Silently one by one,  
Soon dawn will redden the sky  
And the long night will be done.  
Night— When I dream of the light  
In your eyes—so tender, true—  
Imagine your arms about me,  
Swoon for the kiss of you,  
My hand caresses the pillow  
Where your head was wont to lay,  
So empty the house without you—  
Like my heart—when you're away.

HELEN K. ROBERTS.



# Love's Miracle

By Barbara West

THEY were rehearsing the big technicolor scene in "The Pearl King." Later to the fan millions it would flash a masterpiece of delicate green and rose and amber costumes, of high marble pillars and gleaming chandeliers, of fountains, statues, and dwarf bridges starred with roses and chrysanthemums.

In the ecstasy of being here—one of the small immortals to make Schoelling's super-picture—Mignonne caught her breath. It was the first bit she had ever had in the movies.

There was a train on her velvet robe. She had learned to manage it so care-

fully, because the least swishing noise would be recorded in that tiny black microphone hanging down by the chandelier. She had to walk on felt-padded soles, to chat with her partner noiselessly. Snitzer, the highly strung director, would murder any one who made a sound once they commenced the "take."

For hours they had rehearsed the scene on the skeleton set. It should be letter perfect; but Snitzer was as nervous as a herring on a griddle, and Darkholm, the radio star, was nearly as bad. Tempers flew high and black, like thunder clouds. One last time they went through the scene.

"I salute you, Pearl King," said the daughter of many millions, curtsying gravely to the star.

"You are beautiful," said Darkholm, kissing her hand.

"Oh, heck!" cried Snitzer, nearly off his head. "That'll go through the mike like a splash in a bathing pool. You don't have to smack—this is no low-necking comedy."

"I didn't smack," Darkholm replied fiercely.

"All right—only do it again the way you didn't do it before."

The star swallowed his rage and continued the scene, finishing with the theme song:

"Pearl caves and Southern seas  
Come, my fair, and dwell at ease  
By the caverns of the deep  
Where the dolphins play and sleep."

"H'm," said Snitzer unappreciatively. "Now quiet, everybody. Quiet on the upper stage—this is the take. Three bells."

Somewhere a gong pealed.

"On the red," said the sound supervisor.

The cameramen were locked in their sound-proof tanks. The red and blue lights flashed on.

"Interlock," said Snitzer.

A man tiptoed to center stage and clapped his hands noiselessly. Dead silence fell.

Like ghosts the great army of extra men and women moved, fanned, and appeared to chat. Mignonne's partner was nondescript. She felt that if she met him again she wouldn't know him. She glanced across a fountain and saw the man she had been noticing off and on for the last half hour. He was tall, dark, vehement-looking—thin to emaciation. He might be any age, with that haggard, strained expression, the deep burning eyes, the hard, stern lips.

His evening clothes were not as perfect a fit as they might have been.

Probably rented, Mignonne told herself. He was watching Darkholm; he had been watching the star ever since Mignonne had first noticed him.

Then suddenly he turned and his eyes met Mignonne's across the fountain basin.

The lead was making her curtsy. "I salute you, Pearl King——"

There was something startling about looking into those deep, beautiful eyes of the haggard stranger. Mignonne was oddly overcome. From the first she had been interested in this man—and now he was interested in her. You couldn't mistake it. Why, it was as though he had cried out: "Hello, I didn't know it was you, dear!" Just as astonishing as that.

To cover her confusion she leaned a hand on one of the stone rose baskets on the fountain coping.

"You are beautiful," said the star. And as he kissed the lead's hand the rose basket fell with a mighty splash into the fountain.

In her horror at what she had done, Mignonne cried out. The director signaled and a bell rang once.

"Now you've done it," said her partner. "Don't you know you shouldn't touch the property?"

Snitzer and the technical director were on her like wolves. "Did you do that?" the former yelled.

Mignonne's finger flew to her throat. "I'm terribly sorry—oh, please believe me—I didn't know——"

"Did you think this was a section of the pyramids, or Gibraltar or something tough like that?" His voice was laden with sarcasm. "The next time you get rough with picture property, young woman, out you go!"

He said a lot more to her, but Mignonne was too near tears to reply. If only she could hide some place and get away from his yelling!

Finally things settled down again, and they started the retake.

"All right with the sound department?"

"O. K." came the reply from above.

"Cameras ready?" was the next question.

"O. K." some one called in muffled tones.

At last the scene was under way once more. Mignonne took her partner's proffered arm, forcing herself to raise wistful eyes to his. One of nature's loveliest creatures, she now felt the size of a doll. She suddenly thought of the haggard stranger and wondered what he was thinking of the terrible mistake she had made.

She glanced across at him, but he was not looking in her direction and she could not see the expression in his eyes.

While she was watching him she felt something cold go down her neck. Carefully she put her hand up. Oh, Heaven—the string of artificial pearls she wore had broken! But they were so light and frail that surely the sound of them falling wouldn't matter. Almost fainting with fright she kept pace with her partner. Others on the sound stage might be almost dying from the heat or worrying about melting make-up, but Mignonne was shivering. The beads, one by one, slipped down the low neck of her gown.

The lead curtsied to the Pearl King. The Pearl King told her she was beautiful and kissed her hand. Presently he started on his theme song in a voice that seemed singularly overrated.

"Pearl caves and Southern seas  
Come, my fair, and dwell at ease——"

The telephone rang sharply. The sound department wished to speak to the technical director. Instantly all action stopped. Snitzer cursed and tore his hair.

"Interference," said the sound department. "There's a noise of machine-gun firing on the set. What's wrong?"

Again the directors came striding through the stage, brows like storm clouds. Darkholm, the star, was almost as vocal as Snitzer.

"How many times do we start before we begin?" he wanted to know.

Mignonne, frozen, unable to speak, met the eyes of her stranger, and caught a quick horrified leap of pity in his.

"Why, it's her," a shrill feminine voice finally called. "See, sir, her beads are broken. They're dropping through her underclothes."

In the ensuing silence every one heard the tiny cannonade that the microphone magnified to gun shots.

Suddenly, before Snitzer could say a word, Mignonne dropped the pearls, clapped her hands to her ears, and ran across the bridge. Somehow she broke through the crowds to the door, dashed out and slammed it after her.

Across the great hall was Sound Stage B. It wasn't in use to-day, but of course the door would be locked.

By chance it wasn't. She burst through the darkness, fell over some property into a child's crib, and lay there still as death.

It seemed that she heard the muffled closing of the door; it would be on a spring. For the present Mignonne was beyond thought. She could only lie there and stare into the night, trembling.

Always she had been as sensitive as a wild flower. At school if the teacher scolded her—at a party if she were made conspicuous—even at home around the table of brothers and sisters if they teased her. Her mother had told her she must get over it; she would suffer if she didn't.

Well, presently when this deathly paralysis passed off, she would suffer.

She knew it hadn't been wise to run off that way. It would have been better to explain. Snitzer might have let her stay—he needed her costume. As



it was, if he ever saw her again to recognize her he would probably have a fit of some sort.

She thought of how hard she had worked to come to Hollywood. Her people had hated the idea. Dollar by dollar she had saved the money for her

stepped out beside the girl at Schoelling's registration desk, and said:

"There—that pony brunette. We can use her in the big scene."

And marvelously Mignonne had been engaged!

How she had sung taking her bath—



*"I shouldn't be surprised if you'll do, Miss Kramer," said Bealby. "You see, it's only a very small girl like yourself who can take this part."*

fare and a frail surplus to tide her over till the casting offices felt a need of her. She had taken lessons in diction, in singing, in dancing—working like a slave in Parson's dry goods shop. She had saved the pennies, gazing through dusty windows into the red flower of the sunset where her dream blazed on high. And at last she had come West.

Day by day she had made the rounds of the casting offices, meeting always with failure till her high hopes drooped in the dust. At last—just yesterday—a casting director had

putting the finger wave in her hair! How her pansy eyes had danced! She had developed a quick gay wit to entertain the admiring girls who watched her go off. How could she ever tell them what had happened? They would be waiting—eagerly—to hear.

How thrilled she had been to make up in the long narrow dressing room, to step into her precious evening gown of soft rose Du Barry with the little train!

All at once Mignonne's nerves grew taut. Some one had opened the door. A finger of light swept the studio in

an arc. She stifled a scream and crouched low in the child's crib.

"Don't turn on the switch," said a voice. "There's no need for that. And speak low."

"No need for that either," said another voice. "These quarters carry no echoes."

"Uh-huh? Well, be quick then. What d'ye want?"

"Five grand."

"Get out and cool your ears. I haven't got five thousand."

"I'll take your note on two weeks."

"You'll get nothing in writing."

"All right. Meet me here to-morrow night with five grand. If you don't I'll go to Snitzer and talk."

"He won't believe you."

"Won't he? Boy, you don't know half of my evidence. If you did you'd be hiding in a worm-hole. Is it five grand?"

There was a volley of words that were neither kind nor musical. And at the end a low voice said: "All right. Here—to-morrow—at six fifteen."

"And if they're using this stage?"

"Go to number one-twenty-three."

They stepped out and pulled the door to. Mignonne was startled into something like forgetting herself. The voice of the blackmailer was low-pitched and strange, but surely his victim was the famous radio star—Darkholm!

What could he have been doing? What was going on here?

Evidently all work on the sets was over. Mignonne realized with a start that she must get to the dressing rooms while they were still open. She stepped on the heavy sound-proof carpet, moved in the direction of the door and hunted with beating heart for nearly half an hour before she found it. All about her were switches innumerable, but in the blackness she could find nothing. At last she grasped a knob, turned it, and cried out.

The door was locked.

When she realized the full measure of her predicament she thought of the night watchman. Probably he would make rounds, but would he open the doors? He could not hear her shouts through them. She had not eaten since breakfast, and it would be cold here at night; but these were the least of her troubles. After what had happened in the studio she could not bear to be found in the morning and stared at by curious eyes.

She beat against the walls, but the monk's-cloth drapes and the great air chambers between, permitted no sounds to escape. After more ages of despair Mignonne once more stumbled against the funny little child's crib. Again she threw herself upon it, buried her head in the silly pillow and burst into sobs.

She may have wept an hour—perhaps longer. It would be hard to say just when grief and sleep overlapped. But at last she woke with a start.

She was warm as toast. Some one had covered her with a soft eiderdown. Perhaps she was at home—in the little room next to her mother's. Why, yes, her mother had kissed her—to waken her!

Mignonne opened her eyes and stared at a tall piano lamp with a pink shade. Certainly she was not at home.

"Ah—time to get up," said an extraordinarily pleasant voice.

Then she saw him.

He rose from a big property chair beneath the piano lamp, dropping a magazine onto the floor as he did so.

"Please don't be at all startled. It's been worrying me like the deuce to know how to waken you. It's five o'clock, and I thought we'd better get things going before long—"

Mignonne was staring into the eyes of the shabby young man who had been the cause of her disgrace yesterday, the cause of her little clutch at the rose basket.

"But how did you get here?" she demanded.

He smiled, and lifted her hand in his. "You poor little kid, I—I followed you when you ran off. I saw you come in here, and decided to leave you alone for a while——"

"Did you close the door after me?" she interrupted.

"Yes, I think I did. Then when I got back it was locked. I supposed you'd gone home and I went to my hotel. But I was uneasy—I kept wondering. At last I got it in my head that you were locked in here, and I—of course I had to come out to make sure."

"Why, that was—just wonderful of you!" Mignonne's hands slipped up to her tossed hair. "When did you get here?"

"About two o'clock. I couldn't find the night watchman, so I—well, I broke in through one of the windows."

"Oh, but if they'd caught you?"

"Awkward, eh?" He smiled. "But they didn't and by snooping around I finally found the key board, with the key to this studio hanging on it. So then I came up with my flash light and—found you."

"What's your name?" asked Mignonne impulsively.

"Brown," he told her. "Jack Brown. Plain and neat."

She laughed, comforted all through. How different he seemed from the vehement-looking man she had watched across the set! Why, he was a darling—he couldn't be sweeter.

Yes, he could, too.

"If you'll let me take you up these stairs at the end of the hall to the dressing rooms," he said, "you can change from that exotic robe to your street things. And by the time you get back, I shouldn't wonder if I had performed a miracle."

"What kind?"

"Wait and see."

**LS-6B**

Hearts beating high with adventure, hand in hand, they slipped from the sound stage to the stairs. In the dressing rooms above Mignonne was fairly safe, because the windows faced a bare wall.

"Come back to B in fifteen minutes," whispered Jack Brown.

Mignonne took twenty minutes. She removed her make-up, took a bath, and changed into her pretty beige-and-brown suit with the hat to match and the flat orange ornament. Tiny damp tendrils of black hair curled around the rim.

She returned to Jack Brown fresh as a flower, her dressing bag in her hand. And there in the quiet studio——

"Coffee!" she cried.

He looked proud as a small boy who has built a mighty castle of blocks.

"Raffles has nothing on me. I broke into the cafeteria and stole all this."

The fragrance of the coffee made her weak. She had not eaten since breakfast of the day before.

"And a plate of sandwiches!" Then he looked at Mignonne, small and dainty as a French marquise, and as he poured the coffee he spilled a little.

"Who would think," said Mr. Brown, "that you could sleep a night in a studio and look like that?"

Mignonne, charmed with the compliment, did not mention the bath and other strenuous restoratives.

They sat on floor cushions among dolls and Teddy bears, and grew quite gay over the breakfast—considering that Mignonne was at the end of everything.

"But what will you do?" he asked her. "Of course you can slip out after the doors are opened, but is it all right? I mean——"

"You mean am I broke? Well, yes, I suppose I am." She stifled a sigh. "But I can telegraph for money to go home."

"You won't stay on and try again?"

"Oh, I'd love to—succeed." Her lips trembled under her smile. "I'm afraid I could never again face Snitzer or any other director. My nerve's gone."

"That's not the way to look at it," said Jack. "Keep plugging. At least now they know you're alive."

"I can't," she insisted breathlessly. "You see—I know I'd lose my head. I couldn't trust myself. Why, it's like a nightmare, the way Mr. Darkholm looked at me. The—the contempt in his eyes." She closed her own eyes a minute.

When she opened them she found her companion subtly changed. Something of the dark, vehement quality had returned. "One of these days," said he, "I'll punch his head for that."

Then, Mignonne remembered. She felt she could trust Jack; so she told him the extraordinary conversation she had overheard last night.

"You mean some one was blackmailing Darkholm?"

"Yes, it could have been nothing else. I couldn't see who he was, but I recognized the star's voice. You know, Darkholm was in South America for three years. Do you think it's possible that he did something while he was away, Mr. Brown? Murdered some one or something?"

"I wish you'd call me Jack."

She nodded with shyly bright eyes. "And you must call me Mignonne."

"I'd love to. It's exactly right for you—Mignonne. Of course you may be right about Snitzer's star—frankly, I admit I don't like the fellow—but murder's pretty crude. Perhaps it's not as bad as that."

There was a faint sound—the turning of a key in a lock. Quick as thought Jack touched a switch and the room was in ghostly darkness. Then he stooped down beside Mignonne.

Terrified she clutched him, and his arms closed about her. They could hear the night watchman whistling.

Lights flashed on. "It's all over," thought Mignonne. But the lights were switched off, and the door closed again.

"Saved!" whispered Jack.

It wasn't the danger alone that made Mignonne thrill hot and cold. Here she was, toppling off her cushion into Jack's arms—his cheek pressed against her temple, a corner of his mouth against her ear. He didn't move, and she didn't move, not for quite a long time. She could feel the vibration of his madly beating heart. She wondered if he could hear hers.

Finally Jack switched on the light and said in a matter-of-fact voice: "That was a close call. We can thank our stars for the chair and the two sound screens. They just covered us."

"Will he be back?"

"Not likely."

Mignonne's cheeks were like two soft roses. Jack's eyes were dark and bright with little secret flames. He disposed of the cups in a property china cupboard and he slipped the coffepot behind a bunch of scenery. Then they sat and talked till outside the California sun was shining, and inside the first arrivals were tripping hurriedly past the doorman.

"We'll go out boldly," Jack explained, "talking as though we had heavy business in here. And then we'll watch our chance."

"If we should meet Snitzer!"

"We won't."

"But you'll have to get back on the Pearl King set!"

"Not till later."

Nonchalantly they stepped from the sound room into the hall, and Jack was just in the act of closing the door when they met with their first adventure—a maid. She ran up to them and asked for Mr. Bealby.

Jack and Mignonne exchanged glances. They had recently seen Mr. Bealby's name on a director's chair.

"He hasn't come yet" said Jack. "Can I be of any assistance?"

"Yes, sir. Will you tell Mr. Bealby that Miss Joyce Kays has just got her leg broken and has been taken to the hospital."

"Miss Joyce Kays of the Child Comedies?"

"Yes, sir. She's the star, I guess."

Joyce Kays, the diminutive "big sister" of the tiny actors in Schoelling's Child Comedies—the naughty one who put the others up to all the delightful mischief that made the fans laugh till they cried, and shout for more!

"Ah," said Mignonne, "isn't that too bad! Is she very ill?"

When the maid had answered all questions and gone, Mignonne turned to find her companion watching her with a curious rapt expression. Just then the crowds descended on them, a dozen youngsters from two to ten years old, nurses, mammas, and a host of electricians, cameramen, sound technicians and props, with Mr. Bealby unmistakably in their midst.

"Oh," gasped Mignonne, "we're sunk."

"Not a bit of it," replied Jack. "Listen while I say my piece, and look here"—he squeezed one of her fingers—"don't dare to contradict a word of it." He accosted the good-looking young director. "Are you Mr. Bealby?"

"I am. What can I do for you?"

Jack Brown gave his message and watched consternation sweep the group.

"But good heavens, man, we just started shooting yesterday!"

"You mean a new picture?"

"Yes. When will she be out?"

"Not for months, I'm afraid."

Bealby ran distracted fingers through his hair. "Gosh, I'm sorry for the poor kid. But I tell you we've just commenced——"

"She said she was greatly upset about that," Jack broke in, "but she thought as you hadn't done much on it you

could retake the bits she was in with Miss—er—Kramer here. Miss Kramer has understudied Miss Kays—in fact, they've done much the same sort of work and——"

Mignonne, realizing that he meant her, and had changed her name from Low to Kramer, gasped out loud:

"Jack Brown!"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, stepping lightly on her toes, "I forgot to introduce myself—Jack Brown, as Miss Kramer says. I do some work in pictures and I'm also her manager."

Young Bealby turned and scrutinized the dainty little girl. Suddenly he smiled at her—quite winningly. He began to ask questions. But whenever, overwhelmed and frightened, she tried to answer them, Jack was there smoothly interrupting, giving all information himself. Afterward she discovered that he had pinched her elbow a delicate blue and green.

"I shouldn't be surprised if you'll do, Miss Kramer," said Bealby, catching at a straw. "You see, it's only a very small girl like yourself who can take this part. Can you sing?"

"A little——"

"Why, Miss Kramer's voice is unusually sympathetic!"

"Well, we must have a test at once."

Just then a tiny tot in rompers laid a hand on Mignonne's skirt.

"I like her—her's pretty," said the tot.

Mignonne snatched him up and kissed him. Unconsciously she presented a picture that did her no harm in Bealby's eyes.

She had a vocal test, and presently in the projection room off the stage she listened to her own voice coming from the ceiling, in conversation and in a little song.

It was rather weak, but very sweet. Jack was so enthusiastic that the young director smiled a little—a smile that said, "Like her pretty well, don't you?"

"Now we'll rehearse," said Bealby, and Mignonne knew she was hired.

At noon in the studio cafeteria, she and Jack had their first chance to talk about it.

"Do you think I'll do?" asked Mignonne wildly. "Do you think it's possible I'll do?"

"Why, honey, you're marvelous," he told her. "You were built for the part. The children adore you. You're rather an adorable child yourself, you know. Your voice is sweet as honey, and you're a natural actress."

"Jack darling"—she felt she had known him a hundred years—"is it true? Are you—"

"Kidding you? Look here, what do you take me for?"

"But what gave you the tremendous nerve to do this?"

His eyes on her were very tender. "You'd be surprised what tight places I've wriggled through. When I heard Miss Kays was laid up for a stretch of months I looked at you and saw her successor. It just had to be put across."

"Oh, you're marvelous! But in a day or two she'll be well enough to hear studio gossip, and then she'll say she never knew me."

"Dear child, I've thought of that—not that it's so important, because in a day or two Bealby won't give you up for any reason. But anyway, I've thought of it—and I have a plan."

Her admiring eyes were twin poems of flattery. "What is it?"

"As soon as the lady is well enough to have visitors I shall drop in on her with some pansies, a bag of peanuts, and a toy balloon. Melted by these



*She had lunch with the director and could no longer avoid the knowledge that he was falling in love with her.*

gifts she will listen to me while I tell her the true story of one Mignonne—who will hold Joyce Kay's job for her just as long as the original star is laid up, and no longer."

"But, you precious soul, she'll be most suspicious. You'll have to do more than that to win her."

"Oh, but I shall," said Jack Brown, with a broad comedy grin. "I'll do this—and this—and this——"

With speaking pantomime he showed how he would charm Miss Kays, while Mignonne screamed with laughter.

"Oh, you're a dear," she told him, and impulsively laid her hand on his.

His smile was radiant. Then a shadow fell across the table. Mignonne saw Darkholm strolling past with his lead. She felt Jack's fingers close spasmodically on hers, and when she looked up there was a trace of the haggard, vehement expression she had first noticed. Then he relaxed and smiled again.

No one recognized Mignonne as the girl who had fled so precipitately from Snitzer. With the change of her name to Kramer she seemed to don an entirely new personality. Marvelous to relate Jack Brown was actually one of the first visitors admitted to Miss Kays' room in the hospital some five days later. He took her roses, and a five-pound box of chocolates from Mignonne. He charmed her so effectively that she giggled at his story, relieved perhaps that no scheming rival would fill her place during her absence.

Meanwhile she might have been less well pleased had she been able to watch her handsome young director. From the first, Roy Bealby had liked Mignonne, but now it seemed that he was liking her better and better each day.

He took her to lunch; he took her to dinner. Always he was making excuses to take her somewhere, or to give her extra rehearsals. He would stand sometimes and watch her with the chil-

dren swarming delightedly over her. His eyes would brighten and soften whenever he looked at her.

"She has the makings of a great little actress," he told Mr. Schoelling, the producer.

"While she's young and little," said Schoelling dubiously. "Perhaps, for later on she'd better grab off a good husband."

"And that's not such a bad idea, either," Roy replied gayly. "I'll give the matter my close attention, sir."

"Ha, ha," the producer laughed, "here we have the birth of a big idea."

Mignonne, behind a stack of property, heard every word they said. So did Jack Brown, who had run in to see if she could come to lunch with him.

Jack's face turned pale. He stared at her with quizzical eyes.

"Just what does that mean?" he asked in a voice little above a whisper.

"Nothing," said Mignonne, her cheeks flaming. "Nothing but Roy's nonsense."

So it was Roy now! One doesn't often call a director by his first name. Jack forced a little white smile. Somewhere inside him was a small convulsion. It passed, and he said with calm lips:

"Bealby's a good chap. He's all right."

Mignonne felt strangely chilled. Presently Roy dashed up, and Jack went away. She had lunch with the director and could no longer avoid the knowledge that he was falling in love with her.

Many days passed, and Jack hardly came near Sound Stage B. Mignonne drooped like a flower deprived of water and sunshine.

She wondered about him so much and so often. His quick changes of mood, his gayety, and his vehement depressions. He stuck pretty close to the studios. When there were no parts for him he took odd jobs.

"You know that fellow speaks well," said Roy one day. "Any one to hear him would think he could sing. I asked him once if he had a voice, and he flared up as though I had insulted him. Queer guy."

Mignonne felt the mystery of him, the unhappiness. To herself she admitted that above everything on earth she longed to take that troubled head on her shoulder and comfort it. But when Jack showed that he didn't want her, when he deliberately kept away—what was she to do?

At first she thought perhaps he was forcing himself to keep away. Then gradually as he seemed to be engrossed in other interests, pride came to her rescue. She grew stiff and polite with Jack whenever she met him.

Meanwhile Roy was pressing his suit. She had taken a small apartment on Beverly Boulevard, and one night when he was driving her home beneath the pepper trees, he told her that he loved her.

"I think I began to care the minute Brown introduced us," he said. "There was something about you that yanked my heartstrings loose from their moorings. You're so little—and sweet—and precious."

"Please, please," she begged, "don't love me, Roy. I've tried right along to put you off that idea. I——"

"Oh, I know you have—you're not a bit encouraging. But I love you anyway. Don't you think you can get used to me, dear?"

"It isn't that. I——"

"All right. But I won't take my answer now. You've got to think it over. Tell me—is there another fellow?"

Mignonne flushed painfully. There was a thread of anger in her reply. "No indeed, there's no one else."

Roy looked at her and smiled. It wasn't a happy smile.

Afterward she wept half the night. Why couldn't she love Roy? He was

nice. He was a dear. Wouldn't it be better to make him happy than to eat her heart out thinking of some one who didn't care for her? By morning she had decided she would marry Roy. Only first, just once, she must see Jack.

The picture he was in was nearing completion. There were some retakes and some last-minute scenes to do, but as far as Jack was concerned they were finished with him; so he had taken the job of assistant electrician on Sound Stage A.

Mignonne hated to go up there after him, but she swallowed her pride and also her fear that Snitzer might recognize her. After the children had gone home—which they did earlier than the other actors—she went to the major studio and slipped in with a property man.

Darkholm was alone on a moonlit garden set. Mignonne soon gathered that Snitzer had had a last-minute inspiration to make him sing an old radio favorite—for which he had been specially famed—during the final scene.

She listened, still as a mouse, till it was over. One bell; and she heard Snitzer say to the technical director "Tch-tch, not so good. What's happened to the fellow! Think we'd better leave it out?"

"Better wait till we hear the play back."

They went into the projection room, and instantly Jack was beside Mignonne. At the sight of her his eyes had lighted so that her heart thudded into her throat.

"Studio A is honored," he smiled. "I don't suppose it was any one as humble as myself that brought you here."

"What touching modesty!" she mocked. "Did you think I had come to recall myself to Snitzer?"

"My dear, his memory's as short as his temper. But since it isn't Snitzer who——"



Doggedly she said her piece. "I want to know why you never come to see me any more, Jack Brown?"

"I like that. Every time I come you're just hurrying off somewhere with Bealby."

She wanted frantically to say, "I'd rather be with you," but didn't.

"You—you don't ask me in time," she stammered.

Jack was looking just past her ear. "Ha, then how will it be if I invite you to dinner a week from to-day—Tuesday. Or are you engaged two weeks ahead?"

She was hurt. She had honestly thought he would ask her to-night. "No, I'm free a week from to-day," she admitted; then, in a rush, said: "But Roy may not want me to go with you then."

Jack still looked past her ear, but his face was white and his voice gentle.

"He wants you to marry him, Mignonne?"

"Yes."

There was a long pause. Then, finally, he spoke: "From what I hear, my dear, your Roy is a prince of this industry—an all-around fine fellow."

That was all. He seemed to have finished the interview. Mignonne could almost hear her heart crack in two.

A wave of shame flooded over her. Why, of course that was it. He had seen that she loved him—and he was trying to let her down without hurting her. He wanted to be kind, and not to stand in her way with Roy Bealby. A queer, chivalrous, and cautious person, this Jack Brown.

"Well, I—I must be going." She tried so hard to sound jaunty. "They're all coming back."

It was true. Darkholm, the directors, the sound supervisor, were back on the set. Mignonne smiled at Jack with unnatural brilliance, waggled the fingers of one hand in a careless good-by gesture, and turned to the door.

Outside she knocked against a small, sandy-haired man.

"Excuse me," said he, "but can you tell me if Mr. Darkholm has left?"

"No, he's still in there."

"Thanks, miss, I'll wait a little longer."

Mignonne frowned, trying to remember. There was something familiar about the little man. But she was too shattered by her chat with Jack Brown to take any great interest. She pushed ahead blindly, hardly knowing which way she walked. Then she heard her name called.

"Miss Kramer—Mignonne!"

Roy was peering into Sound Studio B, waiting for her. Breathlessly Mignonne turned and dashed back. She simply couldn't face him—not now.

The executives in A were coming out. Snitzler and three others went into Mr. Schoelling's office. Darkholm was buttonholed by the little old man who had spoken to Mignonne. Jack would be the next to come out, she knew.

Rather than meet him, Mignonne opened a door at random and fled inside. She would wait till he had gone—till there was no danger of seeing him.

The room was bare. Almost at once she realized it was a projection room; and then she saw that the door communicating with the sound stage was open. She looked through it and clasped her hands softly together. Why—it was the play-back room to Stage A, and through the open door, outlined against the draped walls, she could see the lonely silent figure of a man.

He had dropped into a director's chair, elbows on knees, his head in hands. There could be no mistake—it was Jack. Mignonne stared at him mesmerized. What was he doing? Why was he hunched in that disconsolate way?

Slowly her eyes lighted with bright candleflames. She hesitated, trembled on the brink, and was lost.

On the padded floor she crossed to Jack; then swiftly put her arms about him.

"Jack—darling!"

His hands came down, his head up.

"Mignonne, why did you come back?" Oh, the suffering in that face!

"I didn't mean to. I got into the projection room without realizing. But, Jack darling, I'm so glad I did. You do love me—I know you do. And for some reason you pretend you don't. Tell me why?"

He didn't answer. She took his face between her rose-smooth hands and looked deep into his eyes.

"Jack, speak the truth as though your life and honor depended on it. Do you love me?"

His eyes, so stern and grim, melted. He gave a choked little sob and buried his head in her dress.

"You win. I love you."

"Oh, my dear!" Two great tears gathered in her eyes—tears of joy. She turned his face up to hers and, laughing softly, kissed his lips.

At first they were unyielding, those lips, as though even yet the man fought against love. Then, with a small sigh of capitulation, he drew her close, caught her on his knee, and bent over her small face with a raining torrent of kisses.

"I love you—oh, my dear, you'll never know how I love you! I kissed you once before—while you slept in that foolish child's crib."

She was off the earth, sailing through clouds of rosy insanity. She adored this passive rôle, yielding to the fire of his caresses on her hands and lips. That night in Studio B—she had thought her mother was kissing her awake.

"Yes, I love you," he finished bitterly. "And I can't marry you."

"Jack, you don't mean—you're already married?"

"Heavens, no. But I'm poor as Job's turkey, and I'm not even sure if I can

earn enough to keep heart and spirit together—for I've got to learn a brand-new way of doing it."

"But, Jack, what do I care? What does money mean to me? Not a thing. Why should it? I tell you I love you—I'd rather starve in a boat with you than live on caviar in a palace without you. Why, Jack—you're my life and soul and heart—you're my whole world! Don't you know what that means? Can't you see?"

"But the money part isn't all, darling? Can't you understand? I'm broken; my faith is gone. I can't tie you to a man who has no comeback."

"You mean you can't untie me. You can't get rid of me. Darling, I'm here to stay. Only—you're not broken. You're strong and game and successful. And all sorts of good things are coming to us."

For five minutes she talked like a general leading his men to victory, and then with a sob of joy she welcomed the comeback in his eyes.

"Mignonne, I want to sing to you. I feel as though—I must sing a song about how much I love you. I have no voice—it's gone—but I must try."

Gently he put her down and crossed to the grand piano below the set. She followed him, cuddling her cheek against the tweed of his coat.

"Somehow," he said, "the poets and song writers can always tell how we feel just a little better than we can ourselves. Keep close, darling."

He ran his fingers over the chords and sang:

"When the dawn flames in the sky,  
I love you;  
When the birdlings wake and cry,  
I love you;  
When the swaying blades of corn  
Whisper soft at breaking morn,  
Love to me anew is born,  
I love you."

Standing behind him, her hands on his shoulders, Mignonne slowly lost



*He had said he had no voice.  
But this was a tender, a  
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minute it gained in strength.*

herself. He had said he had no voice. But this was a tender, a gorgeous voice. By the minute it gained in strength—as though Mignonne's touch brought vitality to the singer and power to his voice.

Spellbound, she listened, and woke to the fact that others were in the room—that a man was climbing stealthily to the sound cage above—that Snitzer was listening. Perhaps Schoelling had brought them to the projection room for some rushes—and they had stumbled on this. He commenced the second verse.

"Dawn and dew proclaim my dream,  
I love you;  
Chant the birds one thrilling theme,  
I love you;  
All the sounds of morning meet,  
Break in yearning at your feet,  
Come and answer, come, my sweet,  
I love you."

It was over—the same song that the star had sung with such indifferent success, for the serenade. There was deep silence. Presently Jack turned to Mignonne bewildered.

"Was I singing? Was I really singing?"

"You were singing, darling, as I have never heard that song sung before. It—was wonderful."

Again she put her arms about him, and like a child he dropped his tired head on her shoulder. There is a convenience sometimes in the height of a very little girl.

Up above through plate-glass superstructure, one could see the sound supervisor pick up his telephone. Snitzer grabbed the other end.

"Look here, Snitz, I caught some of that. Want to hear the play-back?"

"Sure I do," roared the director. "If

it's the way I think it is we'll double Brown's voice for Darkholm in the garden scene."

Indignantly Jack lifted his head from its scented resting place.

"Are they all here?" he complained. "Can't a fellow even make love alone?"

"Not with a voice like that," gloated Snitzer. "No, siree. Why, hello, Darkholm"—with a trace of embarrassment—"didn't know you were there."

Jack Brown wheeled on the piano bench. His brown eyes smiled up at the frowning star in a way that was not pleasant.

"And who the heck are you?" asked Darkholm.

His companion, the little sandy-haired man who had seemed vaguely familiar to Mignonne, gave a queer choked cry, and tried to slip away.

But Jack was up like a flash and across the room. He caught the little creature by the collar and shook him as a puppy would a rag.

"Now speak up, McCrea—who am I?"

There were gaspings and choked protests. Darkholm leaped for the door, but Jack caught him on the point of the jaw and laid him flat.

"I'm beginning to suspect things," said Snitzer. "Here, hold that man!"

Darkholm struggled madly but could not escape. Mignonne stood with the back of her hand pressed to her lips, terrified at the wild, angry faces.

"Now tell me who I am?" Jack Brown commanded through gritted teeth.

"You're Darkholm—Johnnie Darkholm," said the little man. "For Pete's sake—let me go, Johnnie. How could I believe you, when you said you couldn't sing?"

"You believed me all right—you took good care not to see me."

"But look here," Snitzer asked, "do you mean to say this fellow's an impostor?"

Jack told his story. It was short, but rather terrible. Three years before he had taken a vacation from radio work in New York and gone to South America. In a spirit of adventure he had joined a company of explorers and started through the Andes. One day he had become separated from his party and had fallen over a cliff. A Portuguese trapper had found him and taken him home with a supposedly broken back. It had been nearly three years before the paralysis passed off, and he had been able to get away. There had been no means of communicating with the outside world.

When he returned to Rio de Janeiro he had been told at his old hotel that some one—a man by the name of Jules Darkholm—had quite recently claimed his traveling kit and passports. With practically no money, and only rags of clothes, Jack had beaten a passage to San Francisco.

Here he had learned that John Darkholm, having returned from a three-year sojourn in Hollywood, was making a musical picture in Hollywood. Instantly Jack had telegraphed his old manager, Martin McCrea, to meet him. "No money—voice completely gone—some one impersonating me," he had wired.

McCrea had not believed him at first. He had come to Hollywood, met the pseudo-radio star, and never come near the rendezvous mentioned by Jack.

Squirming, full of excuses, McCrea was forced to tell his side of it.

"Don't be too hard on me, gentlemen," he pleaded. "When I met this upstart, who says he's a distant cousin of Johnny's and who happened on his papers by accident, I saw that I might make a good thing out of it. And it didn't seem too tough on Johnny when by his own words he couldn't sing anyway. I always meant to straighten it out afterward."

"And me," said Snitzer, raging, "how

can I be such a fool that I am taken in by this poor imitation of a singer! The name—the name! I was thinking of it and nothing else. Me, I am a goat—a goat with a long beard."

"He has a voice after a fashion," some one soothed him, "and I bet they are cousins, for there's a faint family resemblance. I think his case was good—for one picture anyway. I guess he meant to light out pretty soon."

Mignonne made her escape. Her heart was singing with joy for the man she loved, but she did not like the scene. Outside the studio she caught a bus and rode to Beverly Boulevard.

When she ran up to her small apartment she had a premonition. She was not surprised to find Roy Bealby waiting on a window seat outside her living room.

"Roy," she said dismayed. "Dear, good Roy!"

He followed her inside and caught her hands.

"Those terms haven't the right ring to me, Mignonne. I didn't want your pity, dear."

She looked solemnly into his eyes. "I don't pity you, Roy. You've just met the wrong girl this time. There are—splendid things in store for you."

He laughed at her sadly. "Hooley, my dear—hooley. Is it Jack Brown?"

She told him the events of the afternoon. His surprise was great, but not as great as the dejection he tried to hide.

"May I—kiss you good-by?" he asked. "We'll meet often in the studio, but just the same, this is good-by."

Simply as a child she raised her face to his. She was saddened beyond words, but her heart was too full of Jack to remain so, long. When he came to her, as she knew he would, she was awaiting him in cool sea-green-and-silver, a lovely little French marquise of a girl.

Jack held her to his heart and drew the tips of his fingers wonderingly around her small pointed face.

"Are you really going to be mine, Mignonne?"

"Always—I was yours from the very first," she told him.

"Mignonne—darling!"

He started to tell her how much he owed her for the gift of his voice. Less precious far than the gift of her love, but of importance to them both.

"If I had had my voice I should have made more strenuous efforts to establish my identity, but I had come to the place where I thought it was gone for all time. Through radio friends in New York I intended to unmask my impostor, but it was poor revenge, when I had no future of my own."

Then he told her that he was to sing the serenade for the talkie with feature notices to that effect. Afterward Snitzer would star him in a new picture.

"Mignonne, it was like a miracle—when you showed me how much you loved me. Suddenly I had to try to sing. It all came back to me."

"You really think—it was my love?"

He nodded.

"I know it was. Sweetheart, how soon can we be married?"

She sighed with the luxury of perfect happiness.

"Almost any day, dear."

"Then that's to-morrow."

Close in his arms, Mignonne rested contented. Between kisses they planned their golden future of happiness and love together.

"And you will always be mine, won't you, darling love?"

"Always, beloved," Mignonne murmured, shyly kissing his cheek.

And so, cheek to cheek, they sat, both dreaming of the life of love and work before them and thankful that in the bustle of a madly rushing world they had found the true love for which each had been seeking.



## Dream Visions

By A. Leslie

**A**CROSS the far-flung distances  
Of a world there came  
A vision of your piquant face,  
An orchid touched with flame.

A vision sweet of tender  
Eyes and misted hair  
Dusky as the storm cloud lit  
By lightning's fitful glare.

And a golden love came winging  
As a homing bird to nest,  
Like rose petals drifting downward  
On a violet's bell to rest.

And as the whispering dawn wind  
The roses steals to meet,  
Came a memory, haunting, thrilling,  
Of long-past kisses sweet.



# A Game For Two

By H. C. Kent

DORIS was conscious that the man was flirting with her. More than that, he was coming right over to accost her on the street. Fresh thing! The nerve of him! But he was good looking and Doris Perkins had an eye for good-looking men.

Still, she couldn't let this man pick her up. What would he think? And yet he seemed determined to pick her up or make the attempt anyway, for he stopped suddenly and raised his hat.

"Pardon me," he said.

"Yes?" said Doris icily.

"Aren't you Miss Waldron?"

"You know I'm not Miss Waldron."

"Really now, I'm sorry you said that. You look so much like Miss Waldron."

"Oh, I do, do I? Well, why don't you get another line, young man?"

"I'm sorry," he said. "I'm no good at lines. But I could have sworn——"

"That I was Miss Waldron."

"Yes."

"You know very well that you didn't think I was Miss Waldron, if there is a Miss Waldron."

"Granted," he said. "I just wanted to know you. Now, there."

"And, I suppose," said Doris, as she took him in from head to foot, and noticed that he was well groomed and about thirty, "that you do this every day in the week."

"Not every day," he said, smiling.

Doris stamped her foot.

"Well, sir," she said, "I want you to know——"

"I'm sorry," he told her contritely. "The fact is, I don't do this at all. But there was something about you——"

"Oh, yes, there was something about me that you couldn't resist."

"Exactly."

"Well, now be off with you or I'll call a cop."

The young man smiled.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Really, I'm sorry."

"Oh, stop apologizing and leave me alone!"

But the young man was not daunted.

"What I mean is," he went on, "here for the first time in my life I really want to know a girl, and she won't let me know her because there are conventions even in this day and age, and she thinks——"

"Never mind what she thinks."

"Sorry." The young man waved his hand.

"You said you were sorry before. You seem to take pride in being sorry."

"I can only say—but why do you keep on talking to me?"

"Why?" Doris stared. She wondered about that herself. "Oh, only because," she said, "you should be told that you are no gentleman."

"Sorry," he said.

"And anyway," she said on an impulse, "I'm a married woman."

"Oh! I don't see you wearing a ring."

"I left it home. But, somehow, the more I look at you, the more I am beginning to understand that you mean well. I'm sorry, too."

"Are you? Say!"

"But, of course, my being married makes——"

"Yes, that does make it rather difficult, doesn't it?"

"It does. But at the same time—I wonder if you would care to call on me? On us?"

"On you and your husband?"

"Why not? I've got the impression that you're probably lonesome. A stranger here. And if we can be of any assistance—we do so much to help people. My husband is the most kind-hearted person in the world."

The young man's face fell.

"No, I don't think——"

"Then good-by. Good-by forever, Mr. Sorry Man."

"Good-by."

Doris hurried up the street.

"Oh, just a second," he called, running after her. "On second thought, I would like to know you and your husband. I should be delighted to call. But what will you tell him?"

"Simply that you tried to pick me up in the street."

"Oh, heavens, no!"

Doris laughed.

"Of course not," she said. "But I can tell him that I met you—well, I'll tell him something. I'll tell him that I met you at a friend's. Do you play bridge?"

"Bridge? Yes."

"Good. Then we'll have you up for bridge. Your name please and the telephone number?"

The young man stared.

"Well, here's my card," he said. "And I'll write my phone number on it. Do you think this will be all right?"

"Of course."

"Then there it is." He handed it over and Doris saw that his name was Bart Summers. "And your name?" he asked.

"Mrs.—Mrs. Wilkins," she said. "Mrs. Archibald Wilkins."

The young man smiled.

"Well, Mrs. Wilkins," he said, "it's been a pleasure to meet you and I hope——"

"Oh, you'll hear from us some night soon."

Doris smiled at him and hurried down the street. She carried a picture of a



rather bewildered young man. She had handled Mr. Bart Summers as he should have been handled, had told him that she was married, and then had invited him to call. Wasn't that delicious? Particularly so when she had no husband. But she guessed that could be attended to before the week was up. She wanted to teach this Mr. Bart Summers a lesson.

That night when Archie Wilkins came up to call on her and Jenny Rand—Doris had never been able to decide which one he called on—she said: "Well, Archie, you're elected."

"Am I? What's the office?"

"My husband."

"Isn't that great!" He turned to Jenny. "Did you hear that? Doris is proposing to me."

"No, she means it," said Jenny, who had heard all about it. Jenny was dark and attractive, almost as attractive as Doris, but not quite. They had shared the apartment together for the past year.

"Does she?" said Wilkins. "Well, what am I supposed to say?"

"That you'll do it," Doris promptly informed him.

"Marry you? Say, what——"

"She means," said Jenny, "that she wants you to pose as her husband for a while. She met a fresh man to-day. He tried to pick her up. Doris said he was a good-looking man. And while, of course, she only wants to teach him a lesson——" Jenny looked at Doris meaningly and Doris blushed.

"Yes," she said, "I just want to put this fellow in his place. So be my husband for a while, Archie, and then we can tell him the joke. If that won't make him feel cheap——"

"And think of the fun," said Jenny, "when he calls. You look at him suspiciously, Archie, even show him a gun. And then——"

"This is all very nice, but where are we going to live?" said Wilkins.

"At your house."

"Oh, at my house." Wilkins shook his head. "At my apartment, eh? And suppose people hear about it? Suppose——"

But finally by persuasion they got Archie to do it. That night Doris and Jenny went over to his apartment and started to add delicate touches to Archie's living room.

"We've got to make it look," said Doris, "as if a woman lives here. What this place needs is the feminine touch."

"Go ahead," said Archie. "There's no sense in my trying to stop you. But for the love of Heaven leave my pipes alone."

Two nights later, Mr. Bart Summers, sitting in his library, was summoned to the phone.

"A lady, sir," said the butler.

"A lady?"

"Yes, a Mrs. Wilkins," he said.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Wilkins," said Bart. He hadn't forgotten her. He took the receiver eagerly and said: "Hello. Hello, Mrs. Wilkins."

"Oh, Mr. Summers! There you are."

"Here I am," said Bart. "How are you?"

"Very well, thank you. And you?"

"Never better now that I've heard your voice."

"Don't forget that I'm married."

"I can't."

"But as I told you, my husband and I are so interested in people. When I told him that I'd met you at a friend's house he said to invite you over for bridge. So you're invited."

"That's very nice. When do you want me to come?"

"Could—could you come to-night? I don't think we live far from you." She gave him Archie's address.

"I think I can come," he said. "Say, half past eight?"

"Half past eight we'll expect you. Good-by, Mr. Summers."

"Good-by."

Doris hung up the receiver in Archie's apartment. She turned to Jenny and Wilkins and grinned.

"Well," she said, "he's coming over. Isn't this great!"

"It sure is," said Archie. "Now, listen. I might just as well start acting like a husband, so don't mind if I assume a proprietary air."

"Oh, not at all. I'll start by calling you 'dear,'" Doris laughed.

"Dear! That's good. Very well, darling," Archie said tenderly. He turned to Jenny, who was dressed to go out to keep another engagement. "It's too bad, Jenny, that you can't join us."

Jenny looked at him with a disappointed face.

"Yes," she said, "but I made this appointment for to-night and I can't break it. Well, some other night. You can play for one evening with a dummy." She looked at Doris and smiled.

"Yes, we can tell him that at the last moment our fourth player couldn't show up. But I've been thinking, Archie."

"What have you been thinking, sweetheart?" Archie was playing the part of loving husband with a completeness that surprised them all.

Jenny looked at Archie and turned her head.

"Well, what will I do after he leaves?" Doris asked anxiously. "I can't stay here."

"Of course, you can't stay here. After he goes, you just run downstairs and go home. Now don't worry about it, sweetheart. Everything will be all right."

Doris laughed and went out with Jenny, telling Archie that she would be back at eight. On the stoop Jenny said: "Well, this certainly gives Archie Wilkins a chance to make love to you."

"A chance to make love to me?"

"Yes."

"But, oh, my dear——"

"Well, I don't know," said Jenny. "I think he's sweet on you. You know we talked it over and never did know which one of us he came to see. He was so bashful. But now!"

Doris laughed.

"Well," she said, "if he makes love to me he'll have a right to, won't he, Jenny? He's my husband now."

"Yes," said Jenny glumly and she started off down the street on her way to keep her engagement.

At half past eight, right on the dot, the bell of Archie's apartment rang and Doris went to the door. There stood Mr. Bart Summers with a cane on his arm.

"Oh, good evening," he said.

"Good evening," said Doris. "Here, let me take your things. Our maid must have her night off and my husband——"

The "husband" suddenly appeared in the hall.

"Well, dear," he said tentatively.

"Oh, this is Mr. Summers, Archie. My husband, Mr. Summers."

"How do you do?" said Bart. He offered Archie his hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Summers?" Archie shook the hand and tried to look as suspicious as he could.

Perhaps because he was so amateurish, Bart didn't get it. But once inside the living room where Archie was shaking cocktails, Bart began to feel uncomfortable. There was something in the air.

"Nice place you've got," he said.

"Oh, do you like it?"

"Yes, I——"

"Well, you can thank my wife for it all," said Archie. "She fixed everything up."

"Yes, I told my husband that—that so long as a woman spends more time in the house than a man does the house should be fixed up to suit her."



*He seemed determined to pick her up or make the attempt anyway, for he stopped suddenly and raised his hat.*

"A good way," said Bart, "if the woman has taste. And I see that you have." But at the same time he was wondering why the place did look like a man's establishment suddenly made over. There was the feminine touch, but Bart Summers had discerning eyes. All the furniture was heavy and masculine. Only flowers on the table, a homy arrangement of chairs, and a boudoir doll on the sofa revealed a woman's influence.

"And now there you are." Archie handed over a cocktail and Summers expressed his thanks. Doris took a cocktail, too.

"Don't you just love cocktails?" she said, turning to Summers.

Archie glared. Doris looked a little flushed after her drink.

"Well, I like a drink," said Bart.

"So do I. Um. That's good." Doris smiled at Bart, then turned to Archie. "Another, dear?"

"No, I think you've had enough," said Wilkins. "How about a little bridge?"

"Bridge? All right. You know where the table is, dear."

Wilkins certainly knew where it was and when he went out of the room Doris touched Bart's hand.

"Cocktails always make me feel so funny," she said. "They make me think of the moon."

She smiled at Bart and he drew back from her a little.

"Careful," he said. "Your husband may——"

"Oh, shucks. What do I care about him?"

"But, Mrs. Wilkins!"

"I know. But I didn't tell you that I was unhappily married."

"Unhappily married?"

Bart looked up in astonishment.

Just then Archie returned with the table and presently the game began. Doris explained that the fourth player

couldn't come and that it was so late that no one else could be reached.

"Of course, that is," she said. "we did reach some people but they couldn't come."

"Yes," said Bart. "Always the way. Well, I bid two hearts."

"I pass," said Doris. She smiled and leaned over toward Bart's chair. He seemed decidedly uncomfortable but he made no move. He looked up and saw Archie glaring at him and bit his lip.

"Don't you think, dear," Doris asked Archie, "that we could have another drink?"

"No, none for you. If Mr. Summers would——"

"No, thank you."

"Then I bid two spades," Archie said.

"I bid two hearts," said Doris and she looked straight into Bart's eyes.

"He bid two hearts," said Wilkins. "How can you——"

"Two hearts," said Doris and she sighed. "No, what am I talking about? I mean three clubs."

"Well, that's different."

During the next hour Doris flirted with Bart daringly and Archie glared. Bart just sat, not knowing exactly what to do. And at eleven o'clock when he left Doris at the door, having said good night to her "husband" in the living room, he felt her press his hand.

"I hope," she said, "that I'll see you again."

"Why, of course."

"Then if you're home at two o'clock to-morrow I'll phone. All right?"

"All right," said Bart, but he went out upset.

On the stoop he took in a deep breath. So that was it. She wasn't happy with her husband. Well, he might have known it, Bart told himself. Archie looked like a brute. Archie, who was one of the kindest and most mild-mannered men! But during the evening Archie had glared so much and had run

his hand through his hair so fiercely that Bart was sure he was one of those domineering husbands who were always finding fault with their wives.

And he, Bart Summers—why, he was in love with her! A nice situation, he decided—in love with a married woman! He'd have to watch out.

But the following afternoon at two o'clock when he heard her voice, he didn't care.

"Where are you?" he asked.

"Downtown. I wonder if I could see you this afternoon?"

"For tea?"

"Well, for tea or——"

"Well, we could go to tea, but, of course, we'll have to be careful."

"I don't care now," she said softly.

"What do you mean?"

"I'll tell you when I see you."

She did tell him, sitting across from him at the table in the hotel that he had designated as their meeting place, and tears came into her eyes.

"You see," she said, "I might as well tell the truth now. I let it out last night when I had a drink. That's what one drink will do to me. But now that you know——"

"Yes, now that I know——" said Bart. He reached over and touched her hand.

"What should I do?"

"What should you do?"

"Well, should I divorce him?"

"Divorce him!"

"Well, you don't know what it means to a woman to have such a friend," Doris mused. "Every woman likes a friend like you. She likes to turn to him for advice."

"But, my dear girl," said Bart, "I don't know what to say. This is serious. I had no idea——"

"Of course, you had no idea. Particularly when I talked to you that way on the street. But I didn't want you to know. And yet I didn't want you to pass——"

"You didn't want me to what, dear?"

"Pass out of my life forever." Doris looked up at him. Wasn't this delicious? Wasn't this creating one's romance and leading up to a proposal, in a way?

"Well, I don't mind telling you that I didn't want you to pass out of my life, either," he asserted.

"Oh, Bart!"

"And I think I told you that you were the one girl I really wanted to know—and then I learned that you were married, and later I learned that you were married to a brute."

"He is a brute. He beats me."

"Good heavens!"

"He does. I could show you black-and-blue marks. I've simply got to get away from him, Bart. What shall I do?"

"You said something about divorce."

"Yes, but he won't give me one."

"Cruelty——"

"But I think—I may be wrong, but in this State I think you have to——"

Bart nodded his head.

"Maybe you're right," he said. "I've never had occasion to go into these things. But I have a friend who's a lawyer. I could take it up with him."

"No, not yet."

"But you can't go on——"

"Well, for a while just let's think it over. And you really wanted to meet me, you say?"

"You know I did."

"Really?"

"Honest and truly. I—Doris, I don't know——"

"I wish you'd say it."

"Well, I fell in love with you. There, now."

She reached over and clasped his hand. "Bart!"

As he looked up, an astonished expression passed over his face. "Your husband!" he said. "Look!"

There was Archie with Jenny. They were strolling through the dining room as carelessly as though they were on a

beach. Doris, taking in the situation at a glance, dug her nails into her palm.

"And with another woman!" she said.

"Come, let's get out," said Bart. "Maybe you will be divorcing him. They don't see us."

"No, but——"

"Come along," said Bart. "We don't want to let them see us here."

It was that night that Doris had a change of heart. She knew it was bound to come. She was in love with Bart, and being in love with him she didn't want to fool him this way. But what could she do? She had started something to teach him a lesson, but now that she knew that he was in love with her she was the one who was being taught.

It was an intricate problem to face.

That night she said to Jenny and Wilkins, who were laughing: "Well, it might be funny to you people, but it's not to me."

"But, my dear girl," said Archie, "what can we do? We simply followed orders. And since you seem to have—er—fallen for this man it's up to you to tell him."

"How I fooled him?"

"Yes."

Doris stood up.

"Never," she said. "He would never forgive me."

"But you can't go on——"

"No, I know I can't go on and that's just it. Can't you think of something, Archie, where I can get out of this gracefully and retain his respect?"

But Archie could think of nothing and neither could Jenny and for the time being there was nothing to do. The deception would have to go on.

But Fate took a hand.

The following day riding down Fifth Avenue on the top of a bus, Bart Summers saw a friend of his talking to two girls, whose backs were toward Bart. At the next stop he got out. He walked

back to meet Tommy Lane when suddenly he saw that Lane had said goodbye to the girls and was coming toward him. And Lane was laughing.

As Lane spied Bart, he waved his hand.

"Hello, Bart," he said. "Say, listen, I've just heard the funniest story——"

"What's the joke?"

"Joke?" said Lane. "It's perfect! Listen. I just met an old friend of mine, Jenny Rand. She was with a mighty good-looking girl. And Jenny up and tells me about this friend of hers who has been kidding some fellow. It seems he tried to pick her up on the street."

"What!"

"He tried to pick her up on the street," gurgled Tommy, "and to show him where he got off she told him she was married. Then she gets some fellow to pose as her husband and invites the sap to call."

Bart bit his lip.

"And, of course, she didn't tell you who the fellow was," he said gravely.

"Oh, she didn't say. And I could see that this Doris Perkins didn't want Jenny to go babbling, but Jenny's that kind. Well, old fellow, suppose a thing like that happened to you?"

"Yes, suppose," said Bart ironically.

Later, after he had left Lane, he went over to a speakeasy and got a drink. So that was it. Doris Perkins had fooled him. Doris Perkins had made a fool out of him! And how she and the others must have laughed up their sleeves!

Then for a moment joy swept over him at the thought that she wasn't married, but it immediately gave way to a feeling of resentment, of bitterness, and even of hatred as he sat there sipping his drink.

Doris Perkins had fooled him. But the thing now to find out was whether or not she really loved the man she had fooled.

Bart remembered how she had looked at him, how she had touched his hand. It might have all been acting, in a way it had been acting, but at the same time it——

He stood up.

Ten minutes later, he had Archie Wilkins on the phone.

"Mrs. Wilkins is not in, you say?"

"No, she's out," said Archie. "She went shopping, but if you call a little later, Mr. Summers, I'm sure she'll be here."

"Thanks. I'll call at five."

Bart knew that Archie would try to reach Doris at once. In this he was not wrong. And at five o'clock when he called, having allowed an hour for Doris to get to Wilkins' apartment, he heard her voice.

"Oh!" said Doris. "How are you, Mr. Summers?"

"I'm all right. How are you?"

"Oh, not so——"

"Husband been mistreating you?"

Doris laughed. "Well, no," she said, "there's something else on my mind."

"I was hoping," said Bart, "that I might call to-night. I'm going away tomorrow for a long time."

"You're going away?" Doris' face fell.

"Yes, to South America," he said.

"Oh!"

"Are you sorry?"

"Of course I'm sorry."

"Will you miss me?"

"You know I will."

"Well, I'll miss you, too. But there's something I think I should tell you. Could I see you at about eight?"

Doris told him that she would be at home to receive him, and then hung up. She turned to Wilkins with a tear-stained face.

"What now?" Archie asked.

"He's going away."

"Oh, he is! Well, then, that solves the problem. How long will he be gone?"

"For a long, long time," said Doris, shaking her head.

"Good. When he comes back I shall have moved. Nothing to worry about now."

"But you don't understand, Archie. I love him."

"Oh, yes, you love him. Well, that does make it rather hard, doesn't it? But what are you going to do?"

"I don't know," said Doris. And she didn't even know at eight o'clock that night when the bell rang.

She went to the door. There stood Mr. Summers with a box of flowers.

"For me?" said Doris. "How nice!"  
"For you," said Bart. "Husband home?"

"Yes, he's inside."

"Good."

Bart strode into the living room and shook Archie's hand.

"Good evening, Mr. Wilkins," he said. "I'm glad you're here. For there is something I have to say to you as well as to your wife."

They both looked up.

"The fact is," Bart said, as he sat down, "that I think the time has come to tell the truth. I mean, Mr. Wilkins,



*Doris hung up the receiver in Archie's apartment. She turned to Jenny and Wilkins and grinned.*

that I don't like to do anything behind your back."

Archie looked at Doris and almost dropped his pipe.

"Yes?" he said.

"Well, then," said Bart, "the situation is this: I love your wife!"

"Oh," said Doris. "Do you? Do you really? You told me——"

"Do you mean to say," said Archie, believing that that was a time to grow indignant, "that you love my wife?"

"That's just what I mean," Bart said.

"Well," said Archie, "of all things!"

"You can look at it any way you like," said Bart. "I don't know what Mrs. Wilkins has told you. But I am sure that she has said something. I don't think she's the kind of woman to deceive a man." Bart looked at Doris innocently and she turned her head.

"Why, yes," she stammered, "I—I've told my husband everything."

"And what I want to know," said Archie, "is how far has this gone?"

"Well," said Bart, smiling, "it has simply been a Platonic friendship, Mr. Wilkins, I mean a Platonic love. You, of course, are the stumblingblock. You are married to Doris and——"

"Ah, I see," said Wilkins. "You want a divorce."

"No, I don't," said Bart. Doris looked up sharply. "The fact is," Bart went on, "I am married myself!"

"Oh!" Doris bit her lip. "Married and you never told me, Bart! How could you have deceived me?"

"Well"—he waved his hand—"I wanted to tell you. I had intended telling you and I'm telling you now. I'm married to one of the finest women in the world. But I don't love her. At the same time I know where my duty lies and I know where Doris' duty lies if you and she, Wilkins, can patch it up."

Archie stared.

"I mean," said Bart, "if you'll stop beating her and all that sort of thing,

I'm sure you can get together and sail your boat. After all"—Doris looked at him with her mouth open and Archie continued to stare—"marriage is a serious thing. And while I have admitted to you that I am in love with your wife, that duty of mine, that wonderful woman that I am married to, comes first." Bart got up.

Archie didn't know what to say.

"Well, I'll stop beating her," he said, "and all those other things. And it certainly was fine of you to come to me in that way. You're all right, Summers. I'm glad to have met you."

"Yes, and another thing," said Bart. "Stop chasing around with other women. Your wife and I saw you one day."

He bowed to Archie, turned to Doris who looked at him bewildered, and held out his hand.

"Good-by," he said.

"Good-by," said Doris. She choked. She got up and followed him outside.

"And I'll never see you again?" she said.

"Never," said Bart. "I'm sorry I deceived you—a fine woman like you. But after thinking it all over—well, good-by, Doris. Good-by."

He wrung her hand, opened the door and went out. The door slammed and he stopped. He heard voices, Doris' and Archie's in the hall. Doris was crying. She was hysterical. Archie was laughing. Then Bart heard her cry: "Oh, it's all right for you to laugh, you big nut, but I love him, do you hear? I've lost him. He's gone forever. And——"

Bart stole down the stairs. Waiting on the other side of the street, he saw Doris come out. She was crying. He could see that. Her handkerchief to her eyes and her shoulders shaking.

He followed her and came up behind her on the next street.

"Pardon me," he said. "Aren't you Miss Waldron?"



Doris swung around.

"Bart!" she said. "Bart Summers!"

"Oh, why, it's Doris Perkins," he said. "I thought——"

"Bart, what do you mean?"

"Well, if you'll come over to the park and sit down on a bench I'll tell you. Did you ever hear that two could play at the same game?"

Quietly, tears still brimming her eyes, Doris followed Bart to the little park. It was dark there, and they found a bench where they were hidden from the glances of any passer-by.

And with the masterfulness of a man who has found the woman he loves and knows that she loves him, Bart swept Doris close in his arms. He did it without a word, as though it were the most natural and wonderful thing in the world. His arms held her to him as though he meant never to let her go.

Doris trembled in his arms. Her heart told her that this was the place where she belonged, deep in Bart's embrace, sheltered from the world. And yet all the time her heart cried out that she loved him and wanted to be his, her mind told her that she could never have his love. He belonged to another girl!

She pushed him from her, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Bart, don't—don't," she whispered tremulously. "Don't you know you're just mocking me cruelly? You're married—you said you were yourself. Your kisses belong to some one else, and—and I can't bear to be played with now!"

She buried her face against his shoulder because it was so near and so big and protective. And then Bart laughed tenderly and put his hand under her chin. Slowly he lifted her face to his.

"Dearest," he said, his lips close to hers, "I'm not married. There could never be any girl but you. I love you with my whole heart and soul—more than I ever dreamed I could love."

For a moment light shone in Doris' eyes, a light of joy and relief. "But—

but why did you say you were married then?" she asked, her face suddenly bewildered. "Why did you stage that scene with Archie if you weren't married at all? I don't understand."

Bart put his hands on her shoulders and, his eyes twinkling, looked down deep into hers. "Why did you tell me you were married—and why did you stage a great many scenes with Archie and me?" he countered. "Tell me that, young lady?"

And then Doris blushed. "I—I guess you have a right to ask that question," she faltered. "I—I just wanted to teach you a lesson. And then—oh, Bart, then I found that I was in love with you!"

"Sweetheart, those are the most wonderful words I ever heard!" Bart cried, and then Doris was in his arms, and he was kissing her bright lips again and again. "Oh, darling, we're through playing a game—you and I. Won't you get down to the serious business of getting married, dear? I want you so—all my own, my wife!"

"Yes, I will," Doris said softly.

Bart kissed her gently, tenderly, ardently, then with a burning fire that thrilled Doris through and through. For a long moment she lay in his arms, aware of nothing but that she loved him.

"But isn't love a game, darling?" She smiled up at him, her lips tremulously close.

He shook his head, his arms tightening about her. "I don't think so, Doris dear," he said, gazing down into her lovely glowing eyes. "Love is much more than a game—it's ecstasy, beauty, inspiration. Sweetheart, to me love means only one thing—you, the most wonderful girl on earth, the girl I'll always adore!"

And Doris, close in his arms, her lips clinging to his, her eyes closed, so that she might realize more poignantly the singing rapture of his kiss, knew that from that moment on love would be everything in the world to her.



## CHAPTER XII.

MELITA, drawing her slim graceful figure up to its full height, despite Steve's clinging arms, stared back at the other girl, a girl who had so apparently been brought up in ease and luxury, whose life had never been touched by work or the want of anything.

"I'm not so sure he'll be sorry," she said in a voice that matched Elise's in cool poise, and instinctively her hands touched Steve's arms as they clung to her. She meant to keep him with her.

A clear laugh, like a pattern etched

# Stepping Out

By  
Georgette MacMillan

*A Serial—Part VI.*

by frost on a windowpane, rippled from Elise's lips.

"I'm sure you must be mad," she said. "You must have been imbibing too freely of the same brand that has addled Steve's poor brain. Will you please release him, that is, set the poor boy free to

follow his manna? Come, Stevie! Come to your own hot manna!" she murmured, still in that clear voice, even though the words were of the same jargon that Melita, or any other of the entertainers, might have used.

A slow smile curved Melita's color-

ful lips. Her hands dropped down at her sides, releasing the arms that clung to her and she stood looking at the other girl.

"Take him," she said. "Take him—if you can."

"That's better! Come, Stevie!"

But the clear, cool voice seemed only to cause Steve to cling more tightly to Melita.

A little gasp of impatience left Elise's brilliant lips. Her blue eyes hardened and her voice had a nervous edge.

"Steve, will you come with me!" A white, jeweled hand moved out as if to tear him away from Melita.

"Let me alone!" It was Steve's voice, irritable, broken, like a puzzled child's. He dropped into a near-by chair and pulled Melita close so that she still stood within the circle of his clinging arms. His head, like a weary child's, rested against her.

As that hand, so white, so delicate, but still so cold and hard-looking touched Steve, something oddly maternal flashed to life in Melita.

"Don't touch him!" There was fury in her rich voice. "Don't put your hand on him again!" As the other girl shrank back, her poise and assurance shaken for perhaps the first time in her life, Melita went on, "If he had wanted to go with you I'd have given him up but he doesn't—so I won't! He was mine, anyway, before he was yours!"

"Melita." It was Lou's voice. He stood beside her. "Have you gone mad?"

She looked up at him, her dark eyes suddenly soft.

"No, Lou," she said in a low voice, "I've got to do this. I can't let her take him—now. She's too cold, too hard, too brilliant—like the jewels she's wearing. I can't let her have him when he needs some one soft, and tender and foolish—like me."

Lou's face, white and strained, grew tense.

He said nothing more.

"If you'll loosen that death grip you have on him he'll come with me," Elise said harshly.

"I loosened it once. You had your chance and couldn't put your trick over. Now it's my turn and it would be just as well if you made yourself scarce. Steve isn't going with you to-night. It's my inning." Melita seemed to be speaking easily, but there was a steel-like quality under the velvet of her voice.

Lou looked from one girl to the other. Elise bent toward Melita slightly.

"You little——"

"Never mind," Melita interrupted. "I know more names than you could call me and I'll consider myself called all of them if you'll just step aside so that I can get out with this boy."

"Shall I take you home, Elise?" Lou made the suggestion when he saw Steve's arm tighten around Melita.

And then, as Elise hesitated, he added:

"You'd better let me. Steve'll only make a scene and then won't go unless we carry him. There's no sense of causing gossip. To-morrow morning we can settle things."

Elise looked at Lou, something unpleasantly insinuating in her blue eyes.

"And I imagine you'll have plenty to settle with this young lady if the reports in the papers are to be believed."

"Exactly!" cried Melita, a sardonic laugh rippling from her lips.

She stood watching Lou take Elise out of the place, and then looked around, marveling a little that so much could happen unnoticed in a place like the Lotus Club.

Every one was too busy with their own concerns to see what even the people at the next table were doing. That was New York, thought Melita—one of the qualities that made it one of the

nicest cities in the world and, at the same time, one of the most tragic.

She looked down at Steve's head and had, in that moment, a sudden blinding flash of understanding of her mother's need of service.

"Come on, boy. I'll take you home," she whispered and then looked around for Cissie.

But the blond head was nowhere in sight, so getting Steve to his feet, she took him out to the curb and was about to call a taxi when he stopped her.

"My car's here," he said a bit thickly. "We'll use it."

Melita hesitated only a moment.

"All right. You wait in it while I get my wrap." She saw him safely to the car, told the chauffeur to wait and then sped back into the club to get her cloak.

In a second she was back again. She got in beside Steve and took his head in her arms.

"Now," she said, contented as she hadn't been for months, "shall I take you home?"

"Never go home—like this. Take me to a hotel and you come, too."

Passing over his suggestion she drew him closer.

"I'll take you home with me, then, dear," she whispered.

It was with a little apprehension that Melita heard Cissie open the door several hours later and come into the house. Cissie might be angry with her for leaving the club. She had every right to be. And then of course Lou, after seeing her cling so to Steve, would withdraw his offer of help. There would be no more talk of her making Broadway.

The thought frightened her for a moment, and then was banished by the knowledge that Steve had clung to her, had wanted her in preference to the gorgeously dressed girl with all of her beauty and jewels.

He had rested for a few moments in her arms—and that was enough.

Cissie stood in the doorway staring at Melita, her perfect poker player's face giving no sign of her feeling.

"Well," she said finally, in her husky voice, "I expected to find you'd eloped and every little thing like that. Where's the boy friend? How'd you ditch him?"

"I didn't." There was a trace of a smile around Melita's mouth as she saw Cissie's eyes open wide in wonder.

"What are you trying to tell me?"

"Just that, old girl. I didn't ditch him. He's here."

Cissie's hands went up in a gesture of complete renunciation of all control of the situation.

"And what are you going to do with him?"

"That depends upon how he wakes up. At present he's sleeping off the effects of too much liquid joy. I parked him in your guest chamber, Cissie, across the hall. That's why I left my door open. So I could hear if he called or anything."

Cissie nodded.

"Fine little nurse you'd make. You've got the instincts all right, but what sort of a mess do you think I'd be in if it was found that that boy spent the night in my house, boozed up?"

Melita looked at Cissie for a long moment.

"You know him then?"

"Know him!" Cissie exclaimed. "Is there any one in New York who doesn't? He's in line for one of the biggest fortunes in the city and his father is one of those boys who's always making a present of several hundred thousand dollars to some school or hospital or something like that. Didn't you know, baby?"

"No," Melita mumbled in a very small voice, for it seemed to her, as she learned of Steve's connections and the real importance of his family, that her hopes, her only half-formed dreams,

were dashed again. She had known he was rich. She had known that he came from a good family, but not quite so rich, not quite so good, not quite so important.

"If his father knew that he'd spent the night here he'd probably have my place raided and closed to-morrow."

Melita started to her feet.

"Oh, Cissie, nothing so terrible could happen! I didn't mean to get you into a jam! I didn't—I truly didn't! But I couldn't endure seeing him go away with that other girl! I couldn't! I couldn't!" Melita's young voice was broken. The color had washed from her face, and the hands that she held out toward Cissie trembled.

Cissie looked at her intently for a moment.

"Come here to me, baby," she finally said in a voice that was not unkind. Her hands on Melita's shoulders she forced the younger girl to meet her eyes. "He's the guy, isn't he?" she asked.

"Yes," Melita replied softly.

Cissie was silent for a moment.

"You're a clever kid, and I'm with you. You're going to have the boy if two brainy women can work it, along with the help of his being really crazy about you. Let's hope that after the shouting's all over his father doesn't disinherit him. I'd been hoping you'd do something like this, but I didn't think you'd do it quite so well."

"What are we going to do about him?" Melita asked, looking at the other girl in surprise.

"We're going to keep him right here until he wakes up sober. I'll take that chance—then the rest is up to you, kid."

Melita stood looking at Cissie with glad eyes.

"Cissie, you're an angel!" she cried, her arms around the older girl, hugging her madly.

"You're the only one who thinks so, kiddie," Cissie laughed a little and pushed Melita toward her bed. "Now

get into bed, baby—you'll want to be your most gorgeous self when the boy friend comes to life in the morning."

It seemed to Melita, as she got undressed, her brain and body a riot of conflicting emotions, that going to bed was a superfluous gesture. How could she sleep, when Steve, whose touch had so changed her whole life, was under the same roof with her?

How could she lie calmly in her bed when she wanted to rush across the hall and fling herself into his arms? How could she be silent when his name seemed to rise involuntarily to her lips?

And yet she did sleep, and rose at noon the next day as fresh as a small, dewy rose.

"That's the mystery about you," said Cissie as they breakfasted together. "You always look as if you'd never done anything but sleep and eat peaches and cream. You never show the wear and tear."

"Lava, old girl! Lava! And now tell me, how's the boy friend?"

"I've sent in his breakfast and a dressing gown and I suppose he'll be sending for you."

"It's strange, since you knew him so well, that I hadn't seen him at your place before. Didn't he ever come there?" Melita's question came after a short silence.

"Sure, he used to be a regular patron of mine and probably will be again now—unless you make him turn over a new leaf. He was in the hospital for a while, before you showed up with Lou that first night."

In the hospital! The words seemed to be written in letters of fire and to dance before Melita's eyes.

That, then, was why his letters had ceased. That was why her own had been returned to her. They probably had never reached his hands.

"What was the trouble?" she heard her own voice asking.

"An accident of some sort."

And for the remainder of the meal Melita seemed in a daze. Cissie's so calmly, so casually spoken words had put an entirely new interpretation on the last few months of her life.

Perhaps Steve had thought she knew what had happened to him, and if he did, then he must have thought her faithless. No wonder, then, that he had gone mad when she was in Lou's home.



*"Don't touch him!" There was fury in her rich voice. "Don't put your hand on him again!"*

Her heart ached as she went back to her room. Misunderstandings caused so much needless suffering.

The chill of late fall was in the air, so Melita dressed in a simple white-

broadcloth gown. She combed her dark hair until it shone, touched her colorful lips with rouge and was standing at the window when some one tapped at her door.



"Come!" She turned, smiling, expecting to see Cissie or her maid.

"Then it really wasn't a dream?" It was Steve's voice, Steve's eyes smiling at her, Steve hurrying across the room toward her, Steve's arms holding her close.

"Steve!" Melita was struggling a little in his grasp, struggling for a freedom that she had no desire for. "You shouldn't have come in here! You shouldn't!"

"After lying in there all night dreaming of you, after waking to wonder if I'd really see you again, hold you in my arms or if it had just been a trick of my own imagination—what did you expect me to do? Write you a note asking to see you, baby thing?" He laughed down at her while his lips claimed hers.

"I don't know what I expected," she said, her own voice tremulous. "I just wanted to see you!"

"It's sweet to hear you say that," he whispered, crushing her in his arms. "You look wonderful this morning, my best beloved."

And then, as she rested wordless in his arms, content just to be there, he continued:

"Have you forgiven me, honey, for that day at Lou's? Can you ever forgive me?" He crushed her scarlet lips with so many swift little kisses that her answer was inaudible. "I was mad that day—wild when I saw you there. I'd been in the hospital and all the time I was there I hadn't had a word from you, even though I'd asked dad to let you know. When I got out I rushed to Provincetown and found you'd gone away and even your mother wouldn't tell me where I could find you. I was mad! And I've been acting like a mad man since."

Melita struggled free of his arms, held him away and looked at him.

"Poor Steve," she said in a broken little voice, as she looked at his face,

pale and thin. "What have you been doing to yourself?"

"It would be easier to tell you what I haven't been doing, baby thing."

"Then what haven't you been doing?"

Steve looked away for a moment. He seemed to find it impossible to meet the gaze of her soft eyes, that looked so earnestly into his own.

"Well, I haven't been doing much to make a place for you and me, Melita. When it seemed to me that I'd lost you—well, I just went blah! I haven't seemed to have any purpose in life but spending the old man's money—not wisely but too well!"

"And your father?" Melita asked, remembering with a feeling of fear the cold-eyed man who had taken Steve away from her that morning in Provincetown.

"He thinks I'm about the worst branch on the family tree."

"I'm sorry," said Melita, softly. "Somehow I wanted you to show him—I wanted you to do that, even if we weren't to have each other."

"I know. And I wish I had. I had every intention of doing that when I left you, and I started to, but I got cracked up in an accident and then lost you and—but I intended to, Melita, little Portuguese rose!"

At the sound of that old name on his lips it seemed to Melita that the love welling within her would stifle her. A funny, hurt little laugh struggled to her lips over the emotion that she tried so desperately to hide.

"I know you intended to, boy," she said. "You had the best of intentions—but you know where the road they pave leads to!"

"Yes, and it's been that for me—it's been that, Melita!"

"And for me." The words came softly from her after a little silence. "I didn't know you were ill—dear. No one told me and it's been awfully—hard without you."



Steve drew her closer against his heart as if he would never release her again.

"Has it really, dear?" There was gentle wonder in his voice. "Then, will you give me another chance? Will you start all over again with me? Will you, dear? I'll make good this time! I'll really stick at it, because you're here and I'll be able to see you often and know that you're mine."

Melita didn't answer immediately.

"But your father, Steve?" she asked finally in a very serious voice, her eyes meeting the youth's gravely. "He won't want you to see me. When he finds out——"

Steve's impetuous voice interrupted her.

"He won't have to find you. He needn't know anything about it until I've shown what I can do, and you and I have settled things between us."

And in his ardor, in his eagerness to reclaim her lips, to crush her again in his arms he failed to notice that Melita did not answer him; that her young face was very grave.

She released herself at last and pushed his dressing-gowned figure a little away from her.

"Better go get dressed, dear," she said gently.

"That isn't a bad idea. I'll phone home and have some clothes sent over."

"Will that be quite safe?" Melita asked quickly, her hand on his arm. "They mustn't know you've stayed here, you know."

Steve smiled.

"I've got the most discreet man in the city, baby thing. He never knows anything!"

And so Melita, standing on tiptoe to touch Steve's forehead with a swift kiss, smiled, patted his shoulder and sent him away.

She had been alone only a moment when Cissie appeared at the door, and finding Steve gone, came into the room.

"What is it, Cissie?" The startled question came involuntarily to Melita's lips at the rather strained, tense expression on Cissie's face.

"The storm is breaking, kiddie," Cissie said, putting an affectionate arm around Melita.

"What do you mean?"

"The old boy's waiting downstairs. He asked to see you. Now, kiddie, you don't have to see him if you don't want to. I'd just as soon invite old Papa Sinclair to an airing as any one I know, and if you say the word I'll do it. I wanted to tell you—just to give you your choice. Sometimes a girl gets a little fun out of telling a conceited old boy like that where he gets off. And, on the other hand, if it's going to break your heart to hear yourself called names that aren't pretty, better not see the old dodo bird."

Melita stood irresolute.

"What would you do?" she asked of Cissie.

"Just what I wanted to, but if you're going to marry one of the gilded boys you might as well get used to talking back to their papas early in the game, you know, kid."

"I'll see him," said Melita, in a low tone.

"Good! I hoped you'd do that! And you couldn't have on better clothes for it. You look like a million dollars all done up in a package for Park Avenue."

"Thanks, old girl!" There was an almost gay note in Melita's voice as she walked from the room with that swaying grace that she had learned from the other entertainers who strutted their stuff on Cissie's dance floor.

She was a very cool, poised little person as she stepped into Cissie's pleasant living room, and something about her brought old Sinclair immediately and involuntarily to his feet. He flushed and cleared his throat as if a little bit annoyed that he had been caught off his

guard enough to acknowledge Melita's very apparent gentility.

"Ah, so you are here! I thought so," were Sinclair's first words, while the cool eyes that Melita remembered so well from that morning in Provincetown stared at her unpleasantly.

"I didn't know that there had been any secret about that, Mr. Sinclair," was Melita's calm, well-modulated reply.

"Well, apparently there has! If there hadn't been, that is, if I'd known this sooner, my son probably would not have been spending the past few weeks trying to drink Manhattan dry!"

Melita stared a little, but made no reply, simply looking at the man with eyes that masked her feeling.

Sinclair stared at her insolently for a moment. Then continued:

"I suppose we might just as well get down to cases instead of losing time. Young women of your stamp usually understand only one language."

Melita's eyes widened first with amazement and then contempt as she watched Sinclair draw his check book from his pocket.

"Come now, just how much would it take to induce you to let my son alone? Free him to lead a respectable life so that he won't be a disgrace to his mother and me?"

Melita, wordless, stood staring at Sinclair, who, check book in hand, bent toward her slightly, as if waiting for her to name a figure so that he might scrawl a check, and so have done with the whole business concerning two human and very young hearts.

"Come, come! How much? I suppose, knowing that I'm a very rich man, you are afraid that you'll let me off too easily? I'm willing to be reasonably generous. I suppose one must expect to pay for his son's scrapes and be glad that one gets away from them with nothing more serious than the loss of a little money." It all came in that chilly superior voice that seemed to make Sin-

clair so little of a really flesh-and-blood human being.

"No, it wasn't that that made me hesitate, Mr. Sinclair," said Melita in a voice that held a little note of weariness. "It was something entirely different—it was sympathy for your son."

Sinclair started.

"Sympathy for my son? Why, the boy's had everything money can buy for him!"

"That's just it—everything money can buy for him. And only that."

Sinclair gasped. "I don't understand you."

"No," said Melita, "you wouldn't."

Sinclair paused for a moment to search Melita's face for some explanation and then, seeming to find none, went on:

"What do you mean, young woman?"

Melita bent toward the man slightly.

"Hasn't it ever occurred to you, Mr. Sinclair, that Steve might need something in his life that money couldn't buy? Something sweet and tender and fine? Love, for instance?"

Sinclair stared at the girl, cleared his throat and flushed uncomfortably.

"Isn't seeing to it that a child has everything he needs, everything he wants, every whim satisfied—giving him love enough?"

Melita smiled pityingly.

"There really isn't much use of our talking about it, is there? We seem to speak a different language." She looked at the man coolly for a moment and then spoke again in a calm, controlled tone: "I can understand, now, your not mailing his letters to me when Steve was in the hospital. It was you to whom he gave them, wasn't it, Mr. Sinclair?"

A slight smile twisted her lips.

"And what if it was? Surely it's a parent's privilege to try to direct his child's life rightly."

"Yes, Mr. Sinclair, it is a parent's privilege so long as that direction



*"Oh, I've sent him away, Cissie! I've sent him away!" Melita's words shook with the weight of their sobs.*

doesn't interfere too seriously with the child's happiness!" There was fire in her young voice, flame in her dark eyes. "You've never really taken time to know your son, to consider him as a human being. You've made a little set of rules for him, with no regard as to whether they fit him or not, and you're going to try to force his life to fit those rules!

"Well, you can't do it! Steve's come back to me, back to me more than he was mine that morning in Provincetown when you scoffed at my mother and me and took him away—and he's going to stay mine now!"

**LS-8B**

"Come, come! This is no time for dramatics!"

And when Melita failed to answer, merely stood staring at the man, her dark eyes blazing, he went on:

"All of this is neither here nor there. Come, now, how much do you want?"

When at last Melita spoke, her words came with a strikingly clear enunciation and in a voice that was low.

"Mr. Sinclair, I don't want a cent of your money. I wouldn't touch a penny of it."

Sinclair sat back and stared at the girl before him.

"Surely you don't expect that I'll allow the boy to marry you!"

Melita laughed, a little low gurgle of laughter that held very little of amusement.

"No—no, I don't expect that."

"Then what are you trying to do? What is your game? You have some letters perhaps? You expect to hound the boy for the rest of his life? Sue him and get a lot of publicity—that would be the way of a girl of your stamp?"

There was something of loathing in Melita's dark eyes as she looked at the man opposite her.

"Yes, I have some letters," she said in a very small voice.

Sinclair started.

"I was afraid so! Steve always was a foolish impetuous boy—carried away by a little feminine beauty. Well, what are you going to do about them? How much do you want for them? I suppose that means that you'll raise the ante?"

"You must remember, Mr. Sinclair," Melita said softly, smiling faintly above the pain that seemed to stifle her heart, "that we have not discussed figures. I shouldn't want you to forget that—ever."

"I know—you have been clever. You have played a good game of poker. How much do you want for those letters, young woman?"

Melita hesitated, seemed to be thinking.

"I'll get them, let you see them. Then you can judge how much they are worth," she said at last in a quiet little voice and then, rising, left the room.

She came back a moment later with a little package of letters—probably not more than a dozen in all. There was something tender in her eyes as she looked at them before handing them to Sinclair.

"Here they are," she said.

While Sinclair looked at them, took them out of their envelopes with fingers that seemed to Melita to be defiling, and looked at them with eyes that were a desecration the girl closed her eyes on the tears that gathered in them.

When she opened them it was to look into Steve's eyes as he stood in the door, staring at his father and her.

"Why there's nothing to these!" Sinclair looked up, a light of triumph in his eyes and an unpleasant note of victory in his voice. "You can't do anything with those! They're all written on a typewriter and not one of them is signed by his real name."

He tossed them onto the floor as if they were of no value.

A little cry of pain came involuntarily from Melita's lips. She picked them up quickly and held them tenderly in hands that trembled.

She stood so for a moment and then turned toward Sinclair, her slim young body inclined toward him slightly.

"I know," she said, concentrated fury in her voice, "they have no money value. I wanted you to see that. I wanted you to understand it if you could. I wanted you for once in your life to realize, if it's possible, that there are things that are beyond the money equation. I wanted you to realize how small your yardstick is, how small your measure of life will always be as long as you make that measure the dollar mark! Oh"—her voice broke a little—"I'm sorry for you. You're missing so much! You're going through life like a blind man!"

"Melita! Dad—what is this? What does it mean?" Steve's voice, a little bit sharp, filled the room.

Sinclair turned quickly, and a little bit startled, to see his son.

"You're still here, then?" he asked, while Melita looked on at the coldness of the greeting between father and son.

"You seem to have the right dope,

dad," Steve said casually. "But what's all the shooting about? And"—he walked over to where Melita stood still clinging to the little packet of letters—"why, you've kept my silly little notes." He took them from her hands, a note of something tender and almost reverential in his voice. "The next time I'll write by hand and sign them with my own name."

Melita made no answer.

Steve put the letters back in Melita's hands, looking down at her with eyes softened with affection. Then he turned to his father.

"Well, dad, have you come to give us your blessing?" he asked, grinning at the older man. "If you have, this early in the day, it's mighty fine of you."

"Blessing!" The word came like a snort. "Don't be foolish, Steve. This is no time for joking. I've come to get you out of a mess."

"Well," Steve replied calmly, "that calls for a little explaining, dad. I wasn't aware that I was in a mess."

"What do you call this? What would any man call being in the room of a woman of this kind?"

"Be careful, dad. I wouldn't say too much if I were you. You know how you hate to apologize—and you're going to have to some day."

"Never! Never! If she wasn't the kind of woman I mean, would she have been leading you into the life you've been in lately? Drunk every day in the week! Never sober! Never come into the office to take care of the business I've put in your hands! Breaking your mother's heart and ruining your own reputation. You can't tell me that it hasn't been the influence of this—this girl that's been doing that."

"You're so wrong that I don't know where to start to put you right," Steve said in a calm voice.

The older man laughed unpleasantly.

"Come, now, don't lie to me. Find out what the girl wants and we'll go—

find out how much she'll take to keep her hands off of you in the future and let you go back to your own kind, to the circle you were born to move in, to the circle you belong in!"

"Dad—" Steve started to protest wildly but the older man cut him short sharply.

"Come! I have no more time to waste on your foolishness. Elise is waiting out there for us. But for her I wouldn't have known where to find you. She's willing to forgive this and let the engagement go on if you straighten up now."

Melita started as if she had been struck. Engagement! The word danced crazily before her vision. Steve engaged! Steve engaged and to another girl!

And then Steve's laugh, harsh and terrible, broke through her distorted thought.

"Elise!" she heard him say in a voice that was weighted with derision. "She'll forgive me! Forgive me! That's good! She'll forgive me when she's been my willing companion. She's put away more liquor than I have. Why, that girl could drink the town dry and then never stagger. She'll forgive me! Oh, that's good! Why all she's ever wanted to marry me for is the freedom marriage will give her! She doesn't love me!"

And then he turned and made a move toward Melita.

She drew away as if she feared the touch of his hands.

"Melita!" he cried, as he sensed her shrinking away from him.

"Is it true?" she asked in a voice that seemed haunted. "Is it true that you are engaged to that girl? That girl I took you away from last night?"

"Yes, Melita, it is true," he said at last. And as her hand went up to her lips in a gesture of pain, while she seemed to shrink still farther from him, he went on: "When I thought I'd lost

you nothing seemed to matter. Elise has been a childhood friend. It was always my parents' and her parents' hope that we'd marry. They'd planned it and"—he seemed loath to go on—"Elise herself seemed to want it, just for the sake of marriage. When I thought I couldn't have you and they were all working so hard for the one thing—it seemed to me that I might as well let them think that their dream had come true. But she knows I don't love her, Melita—I've never told her I loved her. I've told her that—I know that I never can."

Steve had neared her, bent toward her in a passion of tenderness but refrained from so much as touching her hand. Melita looked up at him.

"Please believe me, dear," he said, in a voice that begged for her understanding. "It was a weak, silly thing to do, a conceited thing to do to think that I could make other people happy by just pretending, but I've never said I loved her. I've played fair with her that way—fairer than she's played with me."

And at the last his face grew tense. Melita wondered why. Then her hands lifted and came to rest on his shoulders. She looked up into his eyes with something infinitely tender in her own.

"I believe you," she said simply. "I believe you, Steve. And I'm not going to give you up." She went on in a calm voice, while the older Sinclair seemed to gasp at what he heard: "I'm not going to give you up to any one but yourself. I won't give you up to that girl—her eyes were too cold and too cruel. She couldn't ever love any one but herself, and you need to be loved, so much! You've missed all of that all your life, Steve. I can see it and I won't give you up to another woman, unless she's the kind who'll at least try to make you happy."

"Melita!" The word was like a prayer on his lips.

Her hands still on his shoulders she

stood on tiptoe and touched his forehead with a kiss.

"And now," she said, "suppose you two leave me? Go along with your father, Steve; go back to your job and come to me once in a while to tell me that you've stopped drinking and are working hard." Then turning to the older man, she added:

"Put your check book away, Mr. Sinclair. If you live long enough you will find that there are some women whom you can't buy."

"But, Melita, I can't leave you like this." Steve turned back to her, gripping her hands. "You've got to promise that you'll wait for me. You've got to."

Melita shook her head slowly.

"I won't promise you anything just now, boy," she said softly. "Your father was right about a lot of things he said about family and position and all that. Maybe those things do count a lot more than you and I know—anyway we'll give them a chance. You go back to your family and your work—only come to me sometimes to tell me that you are making good."

"I will." The two words came earnestly from Steve. "I'll make you believe in me, Melita! I'll make you believe in me!"

Steve went out with his father while Melita turned to walk from the room, too blinded by tears to see where she was going.

"Gee, kiddie, you were great! I knew you had it in you! You certainly took the wind out of the old boy's sails! Why, what are you crying for?" As Melita threw herself, sobbing, into Cissie's arms. "She walks away with the whole show—has everybody eating out of her hand and then cries like a little fool when it's all over." But the hands that soothed the girl were tender.

"Oh, I've sent him away, Cissie! I've sent him away!" Melita's words shook with the weight of their sobs.

"But you've sent him away in such a way that he'll be back on his knees before you have time to turn around. You're a clever little girl—and a good one."

And then, as Melita continued to cry, she added:

"Here! Here! This won't do! Can't have your eyes all red for to-night. What would people think has happened to my little play girl?"

Melita looked up in surprise.

"Are you going to let me go back?"

"Let you go back?" Cissie exclaimed. "Why I'd have you arrested if you didn't. Think you could get away with leaving me flat—like that?"

"But—but I told you I was going, and then last night I left the place before it was over. I was pretty mean."

"I never take little things like that seriously, kiddie. Think old Cissie doesn't know how to take a joke? Of course you're coming back to-night and you're going to be the gayest little play girl ever, because you've nailed the best catch in New York."

"But I haven't, Cissie. He may never come back to me."

"Apple sauce!"

### CHAPTER XIII.

That night Melita was at the club in a scarlet dress, dancing and flirting about among the tables as if her heart wasn't trembling in a passion of eagerness under the sword of Damocles that hung over it.

She watched the face of each newcomer as the tables filled, hoping that she might glimpse Steve again, yet hoping just as much that he wouldn't come, that he would stay in that night and get the rest that his pale face and weary eyes had told her he needed.

Gray dawn drew in around the club with a kindly, restful revelation. Voices hushed. Tables emptied. And finally the tired musicians closed their racks,

gathered their instruments and left the place.

Melita leaned back in the taxi beside Cissie, her eyes closed, her hands relaxed in her lap.

And Cissie, understanding her mood, said nothing. They made the trip home in silence.

"Good night, Cissie, ole dear," Melita said in a tired little voice as she moved into her room.

"Good morning, baby! Sleep tight!" was Cissie's answer.

But Melita's sleep was haunted by vague visions and half-formed fears.

Had Steve forgotten her? The question seemed to rotate in her drowsy brain. She had told him not to come to see her, not to come to the night club, to keep away from liquor and to work. She had told him all of that. And yet she was a little bit frightened that he hadn't shown up at the club.

If he never came back—the gulf that yawned at that thought seemed too black and too deep to even dare look into. If he never came back for her—then day after day, night after night, the Lotus Club, with its rich men who held one too tightly and seemed to treasure each opportunity of their hands to touch one's soft skin.

Then just that on through the days and weeks and months and years until——

Melita was breakfasting with Cissie a little after twelve, when the maid brought word that a gentleman was waiting in the living room to see Melita. Her eyes lighted as she looked across the little table at Cissie.

"There! What did I tell you!" were Cissie's words as Melita rose, brushed at her dark curls, touched her soft skin with powder and then pulling her negligee closely around her hurried down the hall.

Her face was alight and her eyes shining while her brain was busy with the gentle chiding that she would give

Steve for leaving his office in the middle of the day to come to her. She would scold him a little for doing the very thing she had wanted him to do.

She stepped into the living room, its light mellow as the sun came through the orange-silk gauze that hung at Cissie's windows and then stopped suddenly—a little cry of surprise on her lips.

The man sitting in the deep chair rose.

"You didn't expect me," he said in a low tone.

"No. No—I didn't."

"And yet—I don't see how you could have helped knowing I'd come. Surely you must have known I'd have to come."

"But I thought—that that night at the club, Steve and that girl that you took home and all—that you'd never want to see me again. I felt—I knew it wasn't the way to treat you, after all you were willing to do."

Lou Carmack approached Melita, stood very close to her, looking down at her with kind eyes.

"Say all I am willing to do, dear—if it is anything at all."

Melita looked up at him, her own dark eyes wide with wonder and surprise.

"Lou, you don't mean it?"

"Certainly I do. Why, do you think that seeing you, that way, about Sinclair could make any difference, beautiful? I know you don't love me, that you never will and I know you do love him. Well, is there anything in all of that to prevent me from doing you a good turn if the chance to is thrown into my hands?"

"Lou! Why—I never dreamed any one could be so fine and so generous!"

"Apple sauce, beautiful! Excelsior and every little thing like that. I'm not being fine or generous. I'm doing something that I expect to get a lot of pleasure out of and perhaps some profit

because you're going over big. Big beautiful!"

Melita could only stand and stare at the man who seemed to be turning her world into a place of dreams come true.

Lou stepped nearer to her, and took her hands.

"Didn't you understand, Melita, when I offered to take Elise home that I was giving you a chance with Steve; or giving him a chance with you? I knew what I was doing, little girl, and though I'd give the world, I'd give everything I own, I'd be your slave for life if I could have you; since I can't there isn't any reason why I shouldn't want you to have everything you want.

"Knowing that you are happy, dear," he continued, after a little silence, during which he had stood clinging to her hands looking down into her eyes, "is next best to having you myself and making you happy myself."

Melita's eyes were misty, like velvety petaled pansies still glistening with morning dew when she spoke.

"Lou, you're the most wonderful man I know." And her voice trembled under its weight of emotion.

He kissed her lightly.

"No, I'm not, beautiful!" he replied, forcing a gay little note to his voice. "I'm just a rather selfish person, seeking my own pleasure in my own way."

"And it's such a sweet way."

They talked a while longer, sitting there in the mellow glow of Cissie's attractive living room, Lou giving Melita pointers about her new work and Melita listening wide-eyed, grasping at the new interest with eager hands.

Here would be something if Steve failed her. Here would be something that was not just a blind alley. If she worked—no telling how far she might go.

Rehearsals were to begin for her the next day at eleven.

"I think you ought to cut out work-



ing for Cissie while you're rehearsing," Lou said.

But Melita was firm.

"I'd rather be independent, boy," she said. "It's sweet of you to want to help me. I appreciate it lots, but I'd

rather know that I'm not piling up debts for myself."

"As you say, beautiful."

But rehearsals were harder than Melita ever had dreamed they could be. After sleeping from about five in the



"I won't go through it again!" she said in a voice that was tipped with flame. "I won't. Get any one you want for the place—I don't want it."

morning to ten, she rose, dressed, and breakfasting lightly, hurried away to the theater where a man who was almost cruel, drilled her in stage business.

Sometimes, as she stood trying desperately to get the exact shade of emphasis the director wanted she felt that the game wasn't worth the effort and she longed for the clean fresh breezes that swept across the harbor at Provincetown, for the restful little streets of the village, for the friendly little houses that faced the world so invitingly.

"You're singing like a wooden Indian!" It was after a week of rehearsal that the director spat the words out at her. "Get the hook for her, boys! She'll queer the whole show if she goes on that way!"

Lou, standing in the wings, stared at the director a moment.

"Ransom, give the girl a chance! You're using too heavy a hand!" he protested. "She's good. She's better than anything you've got around here, better than anything you'll find if you let her slip through your fingers!"

A nasty laugh squeezed through Ransom's thin lips.

"Come on! Walk through that song again!" he said to Melita, a snarl in his voice.

Melita looked at Lou for a moment, then she turned flashing eyes on Ransom.

"I won't go through it again!" she said in a voice that was tipped with flame. "I won't. Get any one you want for the place—I don't want it. I'm handing it back to you on a silver plate with my compliments!"

Head held high, the rest of the company watching her, she walked off the stage.

She was out of the door and in a taxi before Lou reached her. She looked back to see him standing at the curb watching her car disappear.

It hurt her to run away from him, but she couldn't endure breaking down be-

fore him, and she knew that she must cry, or something inside of her would break.

The quiet of Cissie's old house was like balm to her wounded soul. She went up to her room, taking off her things as she moved through the hall, stemming the flood of tears until she reached the privacy of her own room.

But there, once more the tears were stayed by an envelope that lay on her dressing table. It was a letter from her mother—from Letitia who wrote systematically once a week. This was an extra letter.

Melita's heart fluttered for a moment as she took the missive in her hands and slit the envelope.

She read with eager, yet frightened eyes, and when she had finished, sat down silent and tearless, staring out of the window across the little back yard to the rooftops of the houses on the other street.

It had come. The thing that she had felt in those early days while she and Marie went out in the little old car with Bern and his friend.

It had come—and she wondered then how she had known. It had come and she had been spared that anyway.

She picked up her mother's letter again and read its simply written lines.

Bern's boat was gone. The engine had exploded and Bern had been terribly burned and it seemed to be affecting his mind. There was nothing left of the boat. He had turned the steering gear toward shore before he jumped into the dory and escaped, hoping it would drift in, but the wind had not been right, and it burned, there in the middle of the harbor.

"But the little one is all right—strong and growing more beautiful every day—so it's lucky I'm here," Letitia finished.

Melita sat with the letter in her hands, reading over and over again that courageous last line. All through the

whole letter there had not been a weak word, no self-pity for the extra burden that had come upon her.

That was like Letitia; like her breed. It was like the fisherfolk. Things happened and one just accepted them with no whining and no rebellion.

Melita felt something within her spring to life. She came from that stock—that courageous, strong stuff. She had it in her. She could make it serve her there in New York just as Letitia made it serve her in Provincetown.

She was suddenly calm again.

She sat down at the little desk in the corner of her room and wrote a note to her mother, inclosing an extra amount of money.

You're not to worry, because I'm earning enough to do everything for you, and I want to. Give up your work in the storage house and don't try to wash or iron any more. You have your hands full—and I'll send you more money than you have been earning.

It was a simple little note, in simple language such as Letitia would understand and read into all of the love that was welling in Melita's young heart as she wrote it.

She got back into her wraps and hurrying to the subway—for that was after all the quickest means of getting up-town—took a train to Times Square. From there she hurried to the theater.

Ransom was still prowling about the house, growling at chorus girls, calling them names, making fun of their legs and the way they used their feet, fairly goading them into a good performance.

"I'm back, Ran," Melita said, presenting herself to him and speaking in a very calm voice.

"I knew you would be," he muttered.

Lou, anxious-eyed, joined them.

"Your girl friend's going to try it again," Ransom said.

Lou looked at Melita anxiously but said nothing.

Ransom gave the signal for her song and the stage cleared of its array of chorines in their varied attire.

"Give him everything you've got, beautiful," Lou said as Melita passed him in going out front.

Melita smiled up at him confidently.

Ransom had turned his back, with an insolent air of assurance that Melita's work would not be good enough to look at.

But with the first phrase in Melita's lush young voice, he turned as if touched with an electric current. He stood tensely while she continued, and then rushed back stage as she finished.

"There," he said, in a voice that was a little bit wild, "I knew you had it in you! I knew it, but it took a lot of digging to get it out! Sometimes I thought I'd never get down into the real you, but thank Heaven something has hit you hard enough to bring out the best you've got, to stir some of the fire burning behind the ice of your exterior. Hold it now and you're made!"

Lou stood away and looked at her, wondering if the girl he had just heard sing, if the girl who had just exposed such depths of emotion, was the little girl he had found in his car that morning when he was returning from Provincetown.

He went to her, his eyes misty, and his voice thrilling.

"You were wonderful, Melita," he said in a voice that was not quite steady. "Wonderful."

She looked up at him.

"I'm glad—for your sake, for the sake of the faith that you had in me."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

The show opened on Broadway in late November and, billed only as Melita, the little girl who so short a time before had been a clerk in a little Provincetown shop sang and danced her way straight into the hearts of a capacity audience.

After the first act she returned to a dressing room that was deluged with flowers and there, in the only bit of available standing room, was Cissie.

"I always knew you had it in you," she said, her husky voice not quite steady. "We've arranged a party for you at the club after it's all over here, kid." She kissed Melita impetuously. "You're a star already and they don't often make 'em that fast nowadays. It takes the plugging of a crew of press agents generally. But you're there and on your own—you can dictate your own terms to the world now."

"Apple sauce, Cissie! If you keep on talking like that you may make me think I am good!" Her eyes filled with tears of happiness and pride.

"Good?" Cissie repeated. "You're almost too good to be true!"

Lou, standing in the wings at one of her entrances during the second act, whispered, as she passed him:

"Atta girl!"

Her hand moved out swiftly and touched his for just a moment, and then once more she was behind the lights doing her stuff.

At the close of the performance she found herself beside Lou in his car, that had somehow gotten filled, too, with flowers, and going to the Lotus Club.

"I'm so proud of you to-night that I just can't talk," Lou said, his voice breaking a long silence.

Melita's hand found his in the shadows.

"You couldn't say anything that would make me happier than that does," she whispered, huskily. "I'd have wanted to die if I hadn't been able to justify your faith in me."

"You've done more than that. You'll make me a fortune—a fortune that I don't need."

Her heart ached at the trace of sadness that had crept into his voice.

At the club there was an air of extravagant gayety. The whole house was

on its feet when Melita appeared in the door and lifted both hands high in greeting to the play girls and boys whom she had romped with evening after evening. Her finger tips touched her scarlet lips for a moment and then fluttered toward the cheering throng as if scattering her kisses among them.

"This way, please!" A play boy, a little gayer than the others, stood on his chair and held out his hands as if to catch a kiss. "Blow one this way!"

Laughing, Melita blew a kiss in his direction, while he pretended to catch it, to sample its sweetness and then to put it away in his vest pocket.

There was much of that that night. Men vied for Melita's favors, for her dances. Not once, all evening long, did she get entirely around the floor with the same partner.

They stood her on a table and demanded that she sing for them. They pelted her with flowers when she had finished so that she jumped from the table and ran to Lou's arms, laughing, for refuge from that storm of fragrance.

Women exclaimed over her youth and men over her beauty.

And through it all, though her eyes laughed and her voice answered in kind the gay jazz cries that hailed her, though her feet followed mad jazz steps, there was a little aching pain in the quiet place of her heart.

Never once, when she looked up, did she see the eyes whose approval she longed for. Never once did she hear the voice whose one word of praise would have meant more to her than all of the showers of flowers and extravagant phrases that came from the others.

It was when she was finally at home, alone in her own room, with dawn sending its gray fingers to pry into the quiet of her little place, that she felt it most.

It seemed to her then that she would have to weep, but no tears came to relieve the misery that filled her heart.

"Steve! Oh, Steve," the words became audible on her lips in spite of herself, "have you failed me again? Have you slipped away from me forever?"

It seemed to her that if he hadn't come to her in her hour of triumph, triumph that he must surely know about, he never intended to come.

She turned wearily to her bed and crept between the sheets, glad to shut the world out of her life for a few hours, glad to leave consciousness behind.

Waking, at length, to the brilliance of another day, Melita saw Cissie standing at the foot of the bed, watching her.

"I've been wondering how you could do it," said the older girl. "If I'd knocked 'em cold as you did last night there'd be no sleeping for me. I'd have been up hours ago yelling for the papers and fan mail and all that sort of thing."

Melita smiled.

"You old hypocrite!" she said affectionately. "There isn't any one in the world who can take things more calmly than you do—no matter what they are, good or bad."

"Well, we'll call off the meeting of the mutual admiration society for a minute and see what you've done. You've certainly stepped out, lady!"

Stepped out! The words on Cissie's rouged lips stayed Melita's hands and they reached out for the papers and mail. She felt the color leave her face.

Stepped Out!

She shrank from the phrase with its almost sinister meaning that it had had for her.

"No more sharing dressing rooms for you, old girl," Cissie was going on. "You'll march right to the room with the big star on the door and no one will dare dispute your right to it. Here, let's see what they say!"

She was sitting on the bed and leafing through the papers, picking out the dramatic sections and reading aloud the

things that had been said of Melita's performance.

"Not a lemon in the lot," she said when finally she had read the last review. "Every one of them's fit to go into your scrapbook. Keep a scrapbook, kid—it'll be nice for your grandchildren."

"I'll never have any grandchildren, Cissie," said Melita in a very small voice. "I don't suppose I'll ever marry."

"Nonsense! I've heard girls talk like that before."

They turned to the telegrams then.

It seemed to Melita that every one who had ever known her had sent her a message.

"Why, I didn't know that I knew so many people," Melita said, looking up at Cissie, her dark, childlike eyes wide.

"You've always got a lot of friends when you're riding grand and high, kid—that's always the way."

Melita grinned a bit wryly.

"It's like you not to finish that thought," she said.

"Well, what's the use," asked Cissie, "there's enough to hurt you in the world without saying things when you don't have to. Anyway—maybe it'll never happen!"

"Maybe not!" Melita agreed, falling into her mood.

And so life moved on. Weeks passed with Melita's success and popularity growing but with her heart getting a little bit heavier as each performance finished and no word came from Steve.

Lou hovered about her like a guardian angel, never venturing to touch her, but always with that look of longing in his eyes. Sometimes, utterly exhausted from the performance into which she put everything she had, she all but gave in and went into his arms—their tender protection would have seemed so welcome to her tired body.

One morning, among the letters that

Cissie's maid brought in was one in a strange, crude hand. Melita opened it slowly, thoughtfully, a little bit puzzled. She looked at the signature and read: Bern.

It was an awkward little note, of difficult phraseology, but the humble sincerity of it brought the tears to Melita's eyes.

He asked to be forgiven for that final scene he had made, for all of them because, he said, he hadn't understood. He knew now, that she was different. She had been right and he had been so terribly wrong all along.

"Sometimes I wonder how you can ever forgive me, how you can be so nice to me now—and if Marie forgives, too," was the last line of the pitiful little note.

Melita hastened to answer it from the generous fullness of her own heart. She forgave, if indeed there was anything to forgive. And she was sure that Marie had had a lot of happiness during that year with him. And he wasn't to worry because she was doing well enough for all of them and, if she couldn't help, somewhere, her success would be an empty thing.

Empty!

Melita stared at the word after she had written it. Empty! It was empty. Tinkling cymbals and sounding brass! Empty as her heart without the echo of Steve's voice thrilling it, without the warmth of his caresses.

And so the days went by, with her success piling up a big bank account, with letters from Letitia and Bern and from innumerable admirers, with Lou always in the background, her devoted slave.

One afternoon on the bottom of the little pile of mail that she found waiting for her before the *matinée* was a letter addressed in an angular, fashionable hand on the finest of paper.

Melita opened it disinterestedly. She was accustomed to getting much mail

and had learned to regard most of it as quite unimportant.

She looked at the signature and read: Carol Lane. The woman who had picked her up after her accident with Henri!

Melita shivered at the memory and then with only moderately interested eyes started to read:

It's a *débutante* ball, next Saturday evening, my dear. I'm chairman of the committee, and aside from the *debs'* dancing contests I'm supposed to supply a professional program. Won't you come and help me out by doing a turn for us? I've seen you at the theater and applauded until my hands hurt! You're really quite a marvelous little person and I'm proud of having once come so near celebrity..

The note went on giving details as to just when she would like Melita to appear and just where the event was to take place.

Lou came into her dressing room as she finished reading it. She looked up, handing it to him.

"You're going to do it, of course?" Lou asked, interestedly. "They'll pay you handsomely, but it isn't that so much as the increase in popularity you'll have after you've performed for these little *debs* at one of their own parties."

"Yes, I'll do it if you think I'd better."

Lou looked at the girl intently.

"Melita," he said at last, "it hurts me to see you this way. When you have all of New York at your feet and you should be just bubbling with happiness you act as if your heart was broken."

"Don't mind me, ole dear," she said with an attempt at gayety. "I'm probably a bit tired. Nothing more serious than that. I'll go to the *deb* party, of course, and I'll shake a hot foot for them. I'll be the gayest little play girl they've ever seen."

"That's the stuff! That's more like the Melita I used to know."



*"Mother, this is Melita, the little girl I've been telling you about,"  
he said simply.*

And so, on the night of the débütantes' ball, Melita, in a new costume, exotically suited to her dark beauty, appeared at the smart hotel where the event was being given and was taken immediately to Carol Lane, by Lou.

"Here's the little lady, Carol, and you don't know how lucky you are to have gotten her," he said.

"Don't I?" cried Mrs. Lane, taking both of Melita's hands and greeting her like an old friend.

Then, turning to Lou, she added:

"It's almost time for her turn, Lou, so will you play around with Melita until we get these wild children corralled in one end of the ballroom?"

"Boy, what an assignment! What an assignment!" Lou exclaimed, and he swung Melita into the whirl of dancing couples, moving like gay shadows under the changing lights.

Melita, looking at the evidence of extravagance around her, the thousands of flowers and wealth of evergreen that decorated the ballroom, the fortunes in jewels that gleamed on the arms of the debs who had been out for a season and the older women who were there, moved mechanically in Lou's arms until finally, a tall figure moving before her made her slim form quiver.

"What is it, baby?" Lou asked, holding her away for a moment. And then, looking up as Melita made no reply, he murmured: "Oh—old Sinclair."

"And that woman he's with?" Melita asked, her eyes searching the face of a middle-aged woman upon whose countenance generations of aristocracy had etched its unmistakable mark.

"Oh, that's his wife—Steve's mother."

"Steve's mother." Melita's heart turned cold as she repeated the words. It seemed to her then that a great many things had been explained.

Something seemed to snap within her. She laughed a bit loudly and sharply. And when her turn on the program came she moved through the paces of her song and dance with a wild abandon such as Lou had never seen her achieve before. She seemed to have let go. To have broken through all barriers, to reach heights and depths of emotion that could not be merely acting.

She held the audience of debs spell-bound with surprise. No one moved for a moment after she finished her act and then, as if at a given signal came a thunder of applause.

She was recalled again and again until finally, laughing and breathless, she threw a kiss to her audience and said, in a low, husky voice:

"That's all there is—there ain't no more."

In the little dressing room which had been deserted by all of the other artists, she dropped down on the bench in front of the dressing table—her face in her hands.

She was conscious, finally, of a presence behind her.

"Well, Lou," she said, without looking up, "Ran should have seen me to-night—I gave them, as he said, everything I had."

No answer came from the person behind her. Melita felt a strange tenseness in the atmosphere. She felt the blood wash from her hands and leave them icy cold. A little, half-strangled cry of terror left her lips and then, as if with a mighty effort, she turned.

She stared for a long moment at what she saw and then closed her eyes, while her hands went out and were taken in a warm clasp.

"Melita! Melita, baby! Darling!"

"Oh, I'm afraid to open my eyes for fear it won't be true!" she cried in her lush voice. "Is it really you, Steve, after all these weeks and weeks? Is it really you, dear, or am I just dreaming?"

"It's I, darling." He was on his knees in front of her, his arms circling her slim figure and drawing it close. "It seems to me I've waited ages for this moment, precious!"

"And I've nearly died during that time! Oh, Steve, why have you been so cruel to me? Why have you stayed away and let me think that you didn't care?"

"Baby!" He crushed her close against his madly beating heart. "I couldn't come to you, dear, until I could say that I had accomplished what you wanted me to. I had to wait until I



could come to you and say I'm ready to take you now—dear heart—dear little heart of mine. Somehow I expected you to understand and to wait. I knew you would, dear. I knew you loved me that much.

"I knew Carol was getting you for her program to-night and so I came, dear—to steal you away as soon as you were through, because everything is all right for us now, darling mine."

Melita straightened, she held him away from her and looked long into his eyes, as clear and as bright as they had been on that first day that he came into the store in Provincetown. The tired lines were gone from his face. The marks of dissipation had vanished.

"No more boozing, baby, no more wild life—just work and you, that's all I've thought of. And now, old girl, we'll play the rest of our lives together. I've made myself so valuable to the firm that the manager wouldn't let dad fire me if he wanted to!"

"You'll never leave me again?"

"Never, and mother—" Steve started to say, but Melita interrupted.

"I know," she said, "I've seen her. But it needn't make any difference what any of them say now." She bent forward, looking into his eyes, adoration in her own. "I'm earning enough for two and if they dump you out for marrying me, I'll keep things going until you get started somewhere else. We haven't a thing to be afraid of now." Her voice thrilled with the sudden happiness that had flooded her heart and warmed it.

Steve crushed her to him, silent for the moment.

"Baby thing," he said finally in a voice that was not quite steady, "that won't be necessary. I want you to meet my mother to-night—now."

He rose and taking her hand would have led her out into the ballroom.

Melita looked up, the memory of that cold, aristocratic face seeming to lay like ice against her heart.

"Must I go now?" she asked in a very small voice.

"It would please me, dear," he replied gently.

"All right, then. Anything for you—even if it means instant annihilation!"

Sending Steve out, she slipped into the smart ivory chiffon gown that she had brought, a gown that clung to her slim figure with beautiful revelation and then swirled into a thousand jeweled points just above her tiny pumps.

When she recalled him, Steve stood for a moment looking at her, his eyes alight at her sweet, young beauty.

"Darling," he said, "I tremble a little when I think that so much loveliness is really to be mine. I wonder how it happens that it should come to me, what I can do to deserve and be worthy of it."

Melita looked up at him from the closeness of his arms.

"Just love me—lots," she whispered.

"Melita," he murmured, with a sudden flood of feeling, "you won't keep me waiting long? Your theatrical engagement won't keep us from marrying? You won't make me wait, dear?"

"I'll play the season out, Steve, and then I'll marry you. I'll have saved enough money by then for a nest egg for mother."

"Play the season out!" he exclaimed in dismay. "Honey, my wife will have allowance enough for anything she wants to do. Don't keep me waiting, Melita!"

"Darling, it's only until April, then I'll get some one else for my part and always after that we'll be together."

Steve drew her closer.

"I suppose that I must wait that long if you say so," he murmured against the softness of her cheek.

"And now comes the test!" Melita said, straightening her small figure as if gathering together all her courage, as she walked at Steve's side toward where his mother sat.

She stood for a moment in front of the older woman while Steve spoke to his mother:

"Mother, this is Melita, the little girl I've been telling you about," he said simply.

The room seemed to whirl before Melita's eyes while she waited for the chill denunciation to come from the older woman's lips. She seemed to stand there for æons—to be rooted to the spot.

"Why, my dear! What a perfectly beautiful addition you'll be to our family!" A warm, colorful, cordial voice was coming to Melita's ears from somewhere. "I hadn't given Steve credit for so much good sense and discrimination—a girl who can do something very well and who is beautiful besides. I like girls who can do things."

Melita had finally dared to look at Steve's mother and see that her aristocratic face had softened into a really lovely thing. She had turned to her husband who stood at her side eyeing Melita with a not-too-pleased expression.

"My dear, if this is the girl you've been making all of that fuss over I'm ashamed of you! She's not only a very lovely, sweet little thing but see what she did to-night! Put all of the debts in the dancing contest to shame. She can do something really well, and you know how I've always felt about girls who accomplish things!" Turning to Melita, she went on:

"Steve has made me very happy to-night. I was afraid he'd bring home some empty-headed little gold digger and I can see right through your eyes to your clean little soul and find nothing there but good stuff."

She kissed Melita.

"And now, children," she finished, with a funny little grimace at old Sinclair, "go and dance and enjoy yourselves with your father's and my full blessing."

"Oh——" it was the first word that had come out of the surprise that held Melita. "Why, you're wonderful! I'm going to like you—terribly!"

Steve's mother laughed—a warm, colorful, happy laugh.

"Thank you, Melita—I hoped you would."

As Steve and Melita danced away, Melita said:

"Why, your mother isn't anything like I thought she'd be, Steve dear."

"Mother's a thoroughbred. She's too real to be a snob. She's a great little mother!"

"I know it," Melita replied.

Steve, with adoring eyes, looked down at her again, and muttered:

"But this is no place for a man as love hungry as I am, baby thing! I want you where I can hold you close and kiss you lots."

"Strange how great minds always do run in the same channels!"

"Then let's beat it! We'll go home—to my home, I mean. The help is there and we'll have a little engagement supper all alone, darling, before I have to give you up for the night. Oh, best beloved, I love you so much that it makes me afraid."

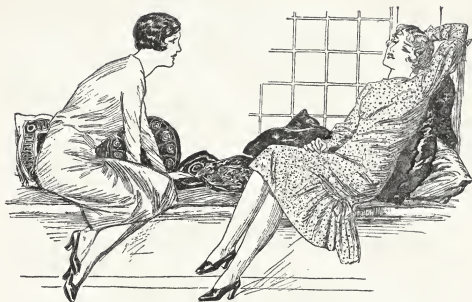
Melita laughed softly in her happiness. "Silly boy!" she chided. "What are you afraid of? Our troubles are all over now and everything is going to be all right. You have me and I have you and we both have enough money to keep the old wolf from the door so why worry?" She looked up at him adoringly.

He bent and kissed her red lips. "We won't worry, precious lamb. Just tell me you love me and I'll be satisfied."

She returned his kiss, then murmured against his lips, "Oh, Stevie boy, I love you—and only you, beloved." His answer was lost in the sweetness of his lips against hers in a mad kiss of ecstasy.

THE END.

LS-8B



# When Jealousy Was Bliss

By Iris Oakley

IT was, Hildegard Severn mused helplessly, pretty dreadful for a girl to feel that she must avoid looking into the mirror. And yet, when one knew one would find reflected there a small, colorless-looking girl in wholly ineffective clothes, what else was there to do?

If one didn't look into the mirror, it was always possible to imagine that the girl reflected there looked a little better than she really did. But, once seen, that mirrored girl left no scope for the imagination. It was not that she was homely. That might perhaps, have been distinctive. And distinctive, Hildegard certainly was not.

Frequently she wondered what she would be like in just the right sort of clothes. But there was little chance of her finding out. It took all the money she made in her small tea room to keep going the old house where she lived with

her mother. It was a delightful house in Stamford, Connecticut. Her mother had been born there and loved it dearly. Hildegard loved it, too, in a way, but of late years it had seemed an ever demanding weight upon her. She poured all her earnings into it.

There was never enough money left over at the end of the month to buy a desired dress or a hat or a pair of slippers. Such things had to be bought, of course; but they were never the kind Hildegard wanted. They were always things that just had to do. And yet the house that demanded her all was always in need of something more. It was not really in good condition, but was merely held together by the amount of care Hildegard was able to give it.

Unfortunately, however, Hildegard's mother would not have been happy anywhere else. And, unfortunately again,

her mother was like the house—always in need of more than she was receiving.

Hildegard had greatly hoped that things would be different after her cousin, Nina Rivers, came to live with them. For Nina, a prosperous young orphan, was to pay her board in the old Severn house. But things had been worse rather than better since Nina had been with them. The money that she paid for her board never seemed quite enough to cover all the extra expenditure that Nina's presence entailed.

Then, too, Nina was a beauty—a gold-rose-and-white beauty. She made friends easily and filled the house with gay young idlers who gave Hildegard about as much attention as they would have given to a drab piece of furniture.

And so whereas before Nina's coming Hildegard had been lonesome enough, now she was forced constantly to compare herself with the beautiful, fortunate, and prosperous Nina.

It was since Nina's coming that Hildegard had considered her own image in the mirror unendurable.

There is just a chance that Hildegard might have felt different about the entire situation had it not been for Hampton Travers. But there again Fate seemed to be leering at her over Nina's lovely shoulder. For Hildegard was hopelessly, infinitely in love with Hampton, and Hampton was going to marry Nina.

Sometimes Hildegard wished that Hampton had not always gone out of his way to be so very nice to her. Now, as she powdered her nose as well as she could without looking at herself too closely, she wondered if she would have fallen in love with him if he had not been the only one of Nina's friends who appeared to find her worth even his teasing. She decided, however, that if Hampton had never glanced in her direction she would inevitably have loved him.

Would he, she wondered with a furtive glance in the mirror, like her hair cut this new way—so very short, like a boy's? Walter Harper had actually condescended to look at her last night and to say that her short hair-cut made her gray eyes look star-lashed. But then Walter was the most unpopular boy in Stamford. No girl had ever been in love with him.

Nina merely tolerated him to enlarge her circle of admirers. So it didn't matter what Walter Harper thought or said about any girl's hair. He didn't count. And as for Hampton, why should he notice how her hair was cut? He loved Nina and felt, for Nina's cousin, only a detached, good-natured friendliness.

"Oh," Hildegard thought, burying her suddenly flushed face in her hands, "I'm wicked! Even if I could, I wouldn't want to rob Nina of Hamp—so why must I think of him as I do, every minute of every day?"

A knock on her bedroom door gave warning that, for the present at least, all thought of Hampton must be banished. Then Nina entered the room.

"I want to talk with you," she began lazily, sinking down in the window seat, and propping a faded cushion behind her back. She added, "It's about David Crossley."

"What about him?" Hildegard asked, and came to sit on the other end of the window seat.

"Well," Nina confessed, "I like him a lot better than I do Hamp."

It seemed to Hildegard that her heart turned directly over.

"Oh," she exclaimed involuntarily, "how can you!"

Nina looked a trifle surprised.

"Don't you like David?"

"Yes, I do—but he's not Hamp."

"Goodness!" said Nina. "Are you in love with Hamp? I never thought of that."

"And you needn't think of it, now," Hildegard retorted, her cheeks crim-

son. "I—I've never even thought of such a thing as falling in love with Hamp—or with any other man. I—well I'm not interested in that sort of thing. I feel toward Hamp just as I might feel toward a brother, if I had one."

"Yes, of course you do," Nina said pacifically. "I understand. I was only teasing you. And I certainly wouldn't want you to be in love with Hamp—for I do intend to marry him."

"Why, if you like David better?" Hildegard asked after a slight hesitation.

Nina shrugged her shoulders.

"Hamp has more money. And I need it. I don't have so much, you know—not nearly enough for all the things I want. Besides I promised to marry Hamp before mother died, and—well, he's awfully in love with me."

Hildegard looked thoughtfully at her cousin. Nina was so lovely. That pale-green dress made her look like a golden-colored rose with a pink flush upon it. No wonder Hamp loved her! How could any man help it? And Hamp, big, laughter-loving, easy-going though he was, had a keen appreciation of beauty. Involuntarily Hildegard glanced down at her own dress of faded brown linen. She hated brown linen and it was anything but becoming to her; but this dress had been marked down at a sale and it had stood hard wear in the tea shop. And yet, since she had no suggestion of Nina's beauty, she was the one who should have just the right clothes. But she hadn't. Hers were all wrong. They were all she could afford. Everything about her was all wrong and everything about Nina was all right. Why should there be so great a difference between two girls?

"But if you intend to marry Hamp," she said finally, "don't you think it would be more sensible to stop thinking about David?"

Nina smiled wryly.

"You can't stop thinking about a man, just because you should," she explained.

Hildegard flushed again. No, she mused, one couldn't stop thinking about a man just because one should. Nina didn't need to tell her that.

"But Hamp is so fine," she protested. "It isn't fair for you to marry him and go on loving another man."

"Well, I don't intend to do that—exactly. "I'm going to put David out of my life, but first I'd like one whole afternoon to say good-by to him. And that's what I wanted to talk about. Hamp is coming over this afternoon for dinner—he often does on Sunday, you know—and I want to go out with David. So I was wondering if you wouldn't look out for Hamp until I got back."

"No," said Hildegard resolutely, "I can't do that. I'm going out for a ride with Walter Harper."

For the second time that afternoon Nina looked her surprise.

"You are!" she exclaimed. "But how strange! You never go out with men."

"No," Hildegard said dryly, "I don't—but I'm going this afternoon."

And yet, last night, when Walter Harper had told Hildegard that her short hair made her eyes look star-lashed and had asked her to go for a ride the following day in his new car, she had had no intention of going. Walter was not unpopular without reason. He was tiresome, egotistical, and bumpiously proud of his possessions. He was the last man on earth with whom Hildegard would care to spend an afternoon. Besides, since she had never been sought by a desirable man in Stamford, she had no intention of appearing to be satisfied with a man that no other girl wanted. So she had told Walter last night that she had a bad cold and could not go out with him to-day.

Walter, however, had been annoyingly certain that she would change her mind. He had assured Hildegard, just

before he left with a number of the other boys who had come in to see Nina, that he would come around with his car the following afternoon. A drive, he had asserted, would do her cold a world of good.

And now Hildegard was actually glad that he was coming. For nothing, she assured herself, would induce her to remain at home and help Nina to deceive Hamp. Then, too, she was not going to let Nina or any other girl think she could be depended upon to take their sweethearts off their hands while they enjoyed themselves with other men.

"Oh, dear, I don't know what I'll do," Nina told her. "If you were going to be home this afternoon everything would be all right. Hamp always has a good time with you. He likes to tease you. But if I'm not here and you're not, either, he's going to resent my going off with David."

"I should think," Hildegard said, "that if Hamp were going to resent your going off with David he would do it whether I was here or not."

Nina frowned impatiently.

"But if you were here and he were teasing you, the time would pass so quickly that he wouldn't realize how long I was gone."

"Well," Hildegard asserted, "I'm not going to be here. Why do you have to go with David this afternoon? Why can't you have your farewell party some other time?"

"Because David has a new position in Boston, and he's leaving here to-night. So I've simply got to be with him this afternoon. Hamp will be wild, too. For, although I've never before given him any cause to be jealous, I know he will be, now. You realize, of course, that I'm always most careful not to be very nice to any of the other boys when Hamp is around."

"Yes," Hildegard quietly acknowledged, "I realize that."

Nina sighed.

"It's going to be awful to-day, though," she deplored. "I hate to make Hamp angry and jealous. He has a fearful temper. And naturally he will be wild if he has to wait here alone all the afternoon while I'm out with some other man. But it just can't be helped, I presume. I know I must go with David—and I don't suppose you could break your engagement with Walter?"

Hildegard lifted her head proudly. She looked, at that moment, very young, like a pugnacious little girl whose childish dignity had been hurt. But then Hildegard never looked her full twenty-four years. Beauty had neglected her, but youth had been generous. It looked solemnly out at you from her star-lashed gray eyes, and there it would linger; for youth, when generous, can give of itself a quality which is eternal.

"No," Hildegard now said emphatically, "I certainly cannot break my engagement with Walter. If you must go out with David, I'm afraid you'll just have to take your chances of making Hamp angry."

"But I won't be taking any chances," Nina pointed out. "It will be a sure thing. For of course Hamp will be jealous, if I give him that much cause. He's so fearfully in love with me."

Nevertheless, despite her certainty of Hampton's disapproval, Nina went out with David Crossley that afternoon. She had been gone at least half an hour when Hampton came. Hildegard, who was waiting for Walter to call for her, was in the living room with her mother when Hamp arrived.

As soon as he had greeted Mrs. Severn he drew Hildegard over to the window.

"Now then," he said, "let's see this new hair cut." And carefully he examined it.

Hildegard's heart was beating fast as she smiled up at him. Oh, he had noticed her hair! He had!

"Do you like it?" she asked shyly.

"Rather! It's great—makes you look more like a youngster than ever. Really, you know, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if I caught you playing with a Teddy bear one of these days."

Resentfully Hildegarde drew away from him.

"I don't know why you always have such a lot to say about me being so young," she complained. "I'm twenty-four years old and——"

"And you look about thirteen," Hampton teased. "But never mind, you won't always be complaining about that. When you're fifty-nine and look forty-eight you'll be glad. You'll come to your old brother, then, and try to wheedle me into telling you how young you look."

Hildegarde left him, then, and went over to the table. Oh, if only he wouldn't keep talking about being a brother to her! She should, she supposed, be glad that, since he could never love her as she loved him, he did care for her in this brotherly way. But she wasn't glad—not a bit.

"I hope," Mrs. Severn said frankly, "that when Hildegarde is fifty-nine she'll have a husband to wheedle compliments from, but I must say that she shows no sign of acquiring one."

Hildegarde's easy flush stained her cheeks and she bent more closely over a magazine she had opened at random.

"Don't you worry about Hildegarde getting married," Hamp advised. "She isn't the sort who wants to bother with men. She'll be much happier without one."

"Will I indeed!" Hildegarde said ominously. "Well, I won't be happier without one this afternoon, at any rate."

"What do you mean?" her mother wanted to know.

"Oh—just that I'm going out with Walter Harper——" Hildegarde paused, her flush deepening. Certainly Walter wasn't anything to brag about! But both her mother and Hamp had placed

her in such a humiliating position that she had felt impelled to brag about some man—and Walter was all she had.

"But you have a cold," Mrs. Severn remembered. "Hadn't you better stay in the house to-day? Besides, Nina has gone out."

Nina's absence drew, at the moment, no comment from Hampton. He was regarding the girl by the table with puzzled displeasure.

"You shouldn't go out with Walter Harper, or any one else, if you have a cold," he asserted. "Why on earth should you want to take a chance of getting ill?"

"How perfectly ridiculous!" Hildegarde said loftily. "It's a marvelous day. An automobile ride will be just wonderful——"

"Not when you have a cold," Hampton interposed with decision. "There's nothing worse than a drafty motor——"

"There's Walter now," Hildegarde broke in. "Good-by. See you later." And she ran out of the room.

Her hat was in the hall. It took but a minute to put it on, and join Walter.

Being Walter, he was not surprised that she had changed her mind. He made, in fact, no comment upon it.

But he talked fluently on another subject all the afternoon—and that subject was Walter Bretton Harper. Hildegarde threw in an absent-minded comment now and then, but she was sincerely glad when Walter's car drew up again before her own house.

Nina, also, was just returning. David Crossley had stopped his car just before Walter's, and both Nina and David were going up the walk to the house. They waited on the veranda for Hildegarde, who bade Walter a rather perfunctory good-by and then joined them.

So it happened that the three young people entered the house together.

"Hasn't it been a gorgeous afternoon?" Nina was asking as David closed

the front door behind them. "The air was so——"

She paused. Hampton was standing in the living-room doorway, his eyes a cold, steel-blue and his brow like thunder.

Nina and David he appeared not even to see. It was toward Hildegard that his thunderous glance was directed.

"Well," he began ominously, "so you didn't bring him in! Why didn't you, since you had no more sense than to go riding around the country with him when you were half sick with a cold? I don't see how, in the circumstances, you could bear to part with him."

Stupefied, Hildegard stared at him.

"Why—what's the matter, Hamp?" she asked at last.

Hamp's look was scathing.

"What's the matter?" he fairly shouted. "You stand there and ask me what's the matter, when you've just practically attempted suicide for the sake of that imbecile, Walt Harper! Don't you know that with a cold as bad as yours you shouldn't go riding around the country?"

"But my cold is better, much better," Hildegard said soothingly.

It did not soothe him. Hamp glared at her.

"If you aren't going to talk sensibly," he retorted, "I don't see how we can get very far with this conversation."

"If you ask me, Hamp," David Crossley interrupted, "I don't see any reason why you should hope to get anywhere with your present conversation—not, at least, until your eyes are opened. For it's evident enough that you've been going around for some time stone-blind."

Hamp transferred his resentful glare from Hildegard to David.

"Now what are you talking about?" he inquired, no more patiently than he had spoken before.

But David was patience itself.

"I'm trying to tell you," he explained,

"that you are jealous, old man. You're jealous of Hildegard."

Here Nina, who had so far been ignored, darted toward Hampton, and caught him by the arm.

"Are you?" she asked eagerly. "Oh, are you? For if you're really jealous of Hildegard she is the one you love, not I! And—and that will be all right with me, Hamp. I was going to tell you, anyway, that I couldn't marry you, because I love David. I thought I could marry you, I mean—but I realized this afternoon that I could never send David away. So if you love Hildegard——"

Hampton was scarcely listening to her, now. He was staring at Hildegard as though he had never seen her before.

"Great Jehoshaphat!" he said slowly, wonderingly. "I believe you're right! I think perhaps I—have been—blind."

Nina gave his arm a thankful squeeze.

"That makes everything so much easier for me," she said with characteristic satisfaction. Then, to David, "Come on, dear. Let's—sort of evaporate."

The best David could do in the way of evaporation was to disappear with Nina through the living-room doorway, but that he did willingly enough.

Hildegard, wonder, amazement, and incredulity in her star-lashed eyes, was left facing Hampton.

"Great Jehoshaphat!" he said again. "Do you suppose that's true? Do you suppose I—have been in love with you all the time?"

"I don't know," Hildegard breathlessly confessed, "but—don't you know?"

"I'm afraid to admit it, even to myself," he acknowledged. "For—of course you don't care a straw about me."

"Don't I?" said Hildegard in a small voice.

"Do you?" Hamp asked quickly.

"Suppose," she hedged, "you find out first how you, yourself, feel."



"But I know," he assured her. "I've known ever since Dave pointed out to me that I was jealous of you—and wasn't I just! Gosh, I was so mad because you went off with Walt Harper that I couldn't even reason. But I hadn't any idea what was wrong with me. But since I've known I—as I told you before, I haven't dared quite to admit it, even to myself—because—well, look here, Hildegarte: Are you in love with Walt?"

"Not awfully," Hildegarte admitted with downcast eyes.

"Oh," said Hamp desolately, "then you are a little in love with him?"

Hildegarte looked up at him and smiled.

"You great big silly!" she exclaimed. "I—love you."

Hamp bridged the distance between them in one step. His arms opened and closed—as though they were to remain closed forevermore—about Hildegarte. His lips, tender but demanding, sought hers.

And, whether you believe it or not, it was Hildegarte's first kiss. It was also her first acquaintance with the ecstasy that is still young, although it was born when the world was new.

"Oh," she asked wonderingly, "how can you love me instead of Nina? She is so lovely?"

"And do you think you aren't lovely?" Hamp asked, tenderly amused. "Why, darling, you are everything there is of beauty and wonder. And those child eyes of yours are star-lashed—do you know that?"

Again Hildegarte smiled up at him. It was queer, she mused, how silly Walter had sounded when he told her, only last night, that her eyes were star-lashed and how wonderful Hamp sounded now when he said exactly the same thing!

And Hamp thought her beautiful! Her—Hildegarte Severn! Also, he loved her and not Nina! Well, if everything was right about Nina's appearance

and everything wrong about her own, it was much better so—since it was she Hamp found desirable.

"Are you going to marry me?" Hamp said anxiously.

"Are you going to ask me?" Hildegarte teased.

"But—I am."

"All right, then—I am, too—going to marry you, I mean."

The kiss Hildegarte then received was her second one, but she liked it even better than the first.

Ten minutes later she felt worldlywise and sophisticated in the art of kissing—for by that time she had been kissed so many times that she had long ago lost count of them. She had not forgotten the thrill of her first kiss—it was only that, by comparison with her ninety-eighth or ninety-ninth, it seemed a little remote. For Hildegarte had learned, now, that it was the kiss she was receiving that was really the most worthwhile.

At last, breathless, radiant, she drew away from him.

"I'm almost afraid to marry you," she told him. "Suppose you should often be jealous and roar at me the way you did this afternoon!"

"But I'll never be jealous now, sweetheart," Hamp promised. "I'll know that you love me and"—with fine logic—"I'll know that I am jealous. You see, the trouble with me to-day was that I didn't know what was wrong with me."

"But," said Hildegarte demurely, "if you're never going to be jealous, how can you know that you are?"

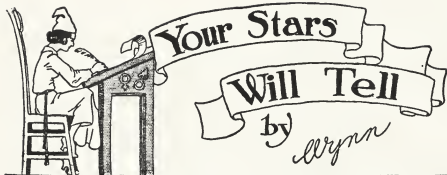
Hamp grinned ruefully.

"Pretty bad, that, wasn't it?" he admitted. "Well, anyway, darling love, I'll never get angry with you again. I couldn't, now. I—love you so much."

"How much?" Hildegarte invited.

Which was, after all, only one way of inviting him to kiss her again.

And, most cordially, her invitation was accepted.



**Editor's Note:** This department is conducted for the benefit of the readers of "Love Story Magazine" as well as for their entertainment, but neither the publishers nor the author can assume responsibility for the reliability of any statement made herein, for incorrect data is often furnished, even when the sender has every reason to believe it correct. Wynn does not make any claim whatever to superhuman knowledge or power, making all deductions by means of the positions of the planets alone, and the results must be taken for what they are worth in the light of your experience.

In order that the greatest number of readers may use the department, each is limited to asking one question. Your questions should be about yourself or your problems. No questions about lost articles, the stock market or gambling will be answered.

Give as much as you can of the following data: date, month, year and place of birth, the hour of the day or night if possible, and the sex.

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## MAKE THE MOST OF NEXT WEEK

*Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time*

### THE WEEK

#### And General Notes on the Future

For the next six months, approximately, the planet Uranus will be retrograding in its transit from the 16th to the 12th degree of the sign Aries, so that between now and about the middle of next January those mentioned in the following will feel its ray in the manner described.

People born January 2nd to 7th should guard health, home and physical assets against their own mistakes, both in business and personal ways. Relations with uncles, aunts, inferiors and small animals are not apt to be comfortable or profitable, so avoid difficulties in those departments of your affairs, if your birthday is in this group.

Natives of April 1st to 7th are now going through personal and mental development which will give them a firmer grip on philosophy and religion than they have ever had before. It may seem somewhat uncon-

fortable to have former beliefs and conditions changed, but in the end it will amount to more than could have been accomplished in any other manner.

Those born July 4th to 9th are now facing a strong combination of occupational difficulty and secret opposition that they must meet with whatever frankness they may have at their command. They must employ all they know of policy and recognition of proper authority, or there may be loss of reputation—scandal possibly.

If you were born August 4th to 9th this is a wonderful period for you if you are willing to dig into the bigger things of spirit and soul development; also a good time generally for travel or the entertainment of those who come from a distance.

October 5th to 10th is a group of birth-days of people who should now keep out of legal and matrimonial and domestic trouble if they are not already in it. Don't marry now and don't try to unmarry yourself, if your natal date falls in this sector.

If December 4th to 9th holds your birthday and you think you have found the ideal mate for a marriage, the probabilities are that

you have; this is a good time for love affairs and the expansion of all interests of those in this group.

**Saturday, July 26th**

Favorable for new ideas, but not for starting to put them into action; avoid money matters.

**Sunday, July 27th**

Unreliable emotionally till 3 p. m.; better after that, but not for important matters.

**Monday, July 28th**

Good for women and mental pursuits; but don't count the boss in the afternoon or evening.

**Tuesday, July 29th**

Good all the way through, if you make no changes before 3:30 p. m.

**Wednesday, July 30th**

Another good day for most people; hop to it if you are not in a negative period personally.

**Thursday, July 31st**

Mixed and unsatisfactory; take no chances, especially in afternoon and evening.

**Friday, August 1st**

A poor start and a good finish are promised for most of us to-day, especially in occupation.

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

The other evening at a dinner party I was seated beside a woman whose dress and mentality made me think of the line, "The less they know the less they wear."

For a long time—possibly three minutes—I tried to be polite and follow the good old rule about being an intelligent listener in order to get myself in right with her. She was talking—just talking. The thing that irritated me most was that I have only one good ear and she was on that side of me and I couldn't help hearing her. She was one of those I-Me-My people who wants to impress the world with the importance of, "My goldfish," "My husband," "My radio," "My car," "My servants," "My home," "My son," and "My et cetera."

I decided to test her, not wishing to decide entirely on her party manners.

You know the story about Mark Twain and the liar. He, Twain, thought the man a ter-

rible bore, quoting statistics and telling about where he had been and what he had done and seen; but that was at first. After Twain found out the man was making it all up out of his head and could qualify as the biggest liar in the world, it became interesting and he listened to the yarn-spinning by the hour with great enjoyment.

That's something the sort of thing that made me want to test the lady at my right.

"Pardon me," I ventured, "but you seem to have a good education and I suppose you have dipped into the philosophies. Have you?"

She gave me a quick glance, sizing me up from a new angle; it was a bit of a mistake on her part to trust her intuition. My appearance often deceives people. I have been told that I look like a slightly older brother of my children, and two years ago I was complimented by a man who asked me to consider his line when deciding what I would make my life work—he admitted later that he thought I was a lad just out of college. Don't tell me different—don't tell me. I like that sort of thing! But about this woman I am trying to tell about:

"Oh, yes," she said. "I have gone into those things quite deeply."

"Good!" I went on. "Perhaps you would answer a question, then?"

"Certainly."

"Which do you think is more important, the motive or the result?" I asked.

If I had slapped her face the expression on it couldn't have been much different. She knew then she was up against something she hadn't bargained for—give her credit for that much—even if it was her own fault that she fell into the trap.

"Why, the motive, of course!" She had taken the high dive and was hoping she was right. "Everything depends on why we do things. If our motive is wrong, our results are wrong."

"Are you saying that because you would prefer to be judged by your motives than by your accomplishments?" I asked. "What is that old saying about the pavement on the road to Hades?"

"The road to Hades is paved with good intentions," she quoted, and her expression was that of a traveler who is getting lost in the mists at sunset far from home.

"What's the difference between good intentions and motives?" I continued.

"None, I guess. But don't they count for anything?" she asked.

"Not in the final check-up, as far as I can see," I answered.

She did not entirely miss on the test, at

that. As the meal progressed we became much better acquainted and got along very nicely.

I probably would not have thought of this again if a letter hadn't come in since that brings it all up. It seems to be the kind of difficulty this unsigned woman, born September 2, 1907, is in. She has had a lot of trouble and always meant to do better. She was married when she was seventeen and that was just the beginning of a long series of mistakes which I shall not quote. The point of this is that she is hoping she can get the judge to check only the fact that she didn't mean to make the errors. Her motives were grand—but her results were just the opposite.

Remember the story about the investigation after the train wreck. Six killed and forty-two injured because the engineer went to sleep at the throttle. "I didn't mean to do it!" was his only defense. "No," commented the officer in charge, "but these people are just as dead as if you had shot them with a machine gun."

Results are what count.

For instance, suppose you go down to the grocer and ask for a quart of milk and he says: "I have two kinds—one will cost you eighteen cents a quart and the other will be thirty." "What's the difference in the quality of the milk?" you ask. "Oh, the milk is just the same, but one of them is in a bigger can!"

You'd soon tell him you were buying milk—not the size of the can it comes out of.

The milk is the usable result; the can that holds it is the motive.

But we can carry this discussion into another part of the same problem, and I have no doubt some of my readers have gotten a little ahead of me already by asking the mental question, "Doesn't this Wynn recognize any difference between good and bad motives?"

Yes indeed!

Bad motives never get you anything that you like. And when you see what you think is another person getting away with public acclaim after doing a selfish act, go into it a little more deeply and you will see that there are two sides to this, as well as to everything else.

Take the case where the man has gained a few dirty dollars by questionable means. They soon begin to irritate what little soul he has and he simply has to give some of it back to the public from which he stole it. Please don't think I am talking of all who are public benefactors, for many are the great men and women who have given to the pub-

lic in the proper manner. I am merely talking one of the few bad cases as my example. He gives a park to the city, hoping it will improve his sleep when things get still in the night. At first glance it may appear that his fear and discomfort and hope of peace from the conscience that jars his ease—which is a very bad foundation for motive—has brought a good result.

True, the park for the children of the city to play in is a good result, regardless of how it got there. Which proves again that the result is what counts.

But as far as the man who gave it is concerned, there is still no peace for him. He must do more than give back part of what he obtained in the questionable manner before he will be comfortable. Paying back the exact amount of a theft does not establish a balance in character. The wound may not bleed any more, but the scar is still there.

Summing up. There is an individual point of view and a general public point of view. From the slant of the individual, the bad motive gets no good results. He is not healed by any sort of tithing of that which was not honestly obtained.

The children who play in his park are the innocent who always benefit. God takes care of that. The world is getting better.

My answer to the woman who stirred up this discussion is to profit by her experiences of the past, checking everything from now on according to the points brought out here. First, be sure the motive is right and then act accordingly, regardless of what appears to be a better plan.

### Brief Answers

You may be surprised, C. S., born February 17, 1898, to learn just why you are on the right track when you pursue your work and studies in electricity. As I see it, the inner reason is that you are going to be able to apply the same principles of physical power that work through the dynamo and battery in some higher way related to human psychology or politics, later on in the course of the development of your service-rendering capacity. Don't hesitate to leave the old, especially in things mental and spiritual. When the urge comes to take up the study of the occult or astrological, embrace it. You will serve well and reap a pretty reward. Glad to have met you. Thanks for the picture.

"We are being married in June," wrote M. S., born June 24, 1909, concerning herself and the man born March 29, 1907. Another gray hair in my rapidly thinning locks. Why ask me if it is the thing to do after

telling me you have decided to do it? This reminds me of a woman who recently told me that she thought all this stuff about selecting the proper partner by astrology is bunk; her idea is that anybody can marry anybody and get along with him or her if the character is strong enough. She is a married woman with a son nearly grown. I listened to her remarks and asked if she was happily married. She said she had no regrets and would do it all over again just the way she did before. When I got her birthday and that of her husband they were in the ideal relationship—four months apart! Her experience proves the rules and laws I have been quoting here more than her words disprove them. By the way, M. S., did you ever read anything I ever wrote that suggested the three months' difference as a good relationship? Let me know if you got married. If you did, I wish you well. I wish you well, anyway, but I hope something postponed the ceremony till you had another chance to think it over.

Well, all right, F. B. F., born March 21, 1902, I'll let you in this time, even if you have a ticket for yesterday's performance. Ordinarily I don't answer people who ask which of "these two" they should marry; but you give what to me is a new slant on it, so I let down the bars for a moment. "I wish to drop one of them before my heart and my imagination influence my brain," is the new slant. What are you afraid of? Do you think you'd have to marry them both at once? Could you drop either of them, no matter which one I might suggest? If not, why ask me? If so, neither of them is the right one. You mentioned two rather headstrong and determined lads there; and you're not so milk and water yourself. Personally, I think you would do well to let your heart decide this for you. Let me know how you get along with the one born April 1, 1901.

It might interest you to know that I have received in my long career of crime many letters from natives in every sign of the Zodiac, each one of whom has discovered that I am poison ivy on their particular section of the heavens. They write to me and say, "Lay off of us for just a little while, won't you? Why can't you take some of your cracks at somebody else now and then?" Which makes it look as though I was down on the human race, when everything is all added together. The truth of it is I am against the weaknesses of each sign and have pointed out a few of them here and there, and of course there are sensitive souls who think I am

socking them harder than any one else. Here is a letter from a native of Pisces, for instance: Mrs. E. C., born March 19, 1894. But, praise be, she is one of the developed ones and has gone far to eliminate the negative side of this sign's characteristics. She recommends, "The Game of Life and How to Play It," a book I have often suggested here, as one of the best helps for those of her sign. She has made the mistakes, but they are in the past. I am glad. By the way, don't be afraid for others, such as you seem to be for your husband, Mrs. C. The influences under which he is now operating are there; it is up to him to tussle with them. He will come out better than otherwise if he will pay attention to my suggestions which accompanied the description of the possible trouble. All he needs to do is control his emotions. That's all. Simple, isn't it? I ought to know.

All of which proves, R. D. S., born May 16, 1897, that mere observance of physical rules and regulations of diet, exercise and sleeping doesn't solve the mental, soul and spiritual problems we sometimes run into. Answering your question about the planetary cause of your worrying, it is no temporary matter, for there is nothing serious indicated this year for you. The trouble lies deeper than that, I am sorry to say, for it is rooted in your character and must be treated as a matter of growth. You must go after it with all your common sense, which I agree you possess, and put good things into your make-up, speaking spiritually, where none have been up to now. You know what they are—you mention them in your letter. All you have to do is do it. Again I say, that's all. Simple, but far from easy. Yet I have seen such things done and I know you can do it. Perhaps that's what this life is for. No one whose horoscope I have ever inspected has had a perfect set of qualities; neither has any one ever been prevented from adding a few by development. You are on the right track. Hope my faith in you will help, for I honestly have a great deal. Build, sister, build! Vain regrets will only tear down. Put the past behind you, where it belongs, and carry on!

"Why can't I be well liked?" asks Mrs. R. S. A., born May 14, 1904: "My husband is always raving about me making a fool of myself." Looks to me as though you try too hard. Remember Æsop's story of the mule who watched his master playing with the little lap dog. The mule was getting along all right, but he envied the little dog who could jump up into his master's chair with

him and get bits of sweet and soft caresses. So he decided to study and adopt the technique of the favorite. One day the mule took a running leap and landed with all four feet close together in the middle of his master's stomach as he was lying in a hammock taking an afternoon snooze. "Now!" thought the mule, "I shall be popular with the boss. As soon as he catches his breath he will pat me and give me sugar to eat." Perhaps some bright little child in the audience can tell what did happen to the mule. It wasn't exactly as he had hoped. Can't recall the words of Æsop's moral to this fable, but it was something like this: 'Don't try to copy any one's technique. Develop your own or don't have any. When you find your line of chatter isn't going over, take a course in "How to Keep Quiet in Any Language." If you feel the conversation sinking, that doesn't mean you are the only one who can save it. Let some one else jump on the master's lap. Don't butt in where you are not invited. Let 'em want you. You can talk yourself into more trouble than you can ever talk yourself out of.

I hope M. A., born March 21, 1910, reads the foregoing; they apply to her, too.

Here are the dates of a triangle: wife, born April 18, 1895; husband, October 19, 1896; other woman, April 19, 1909. Never mind who sent in the data. Whoever it was asked particularly that data be withheld because all three of them are apt to read it in my answer here. What's the matter? Ashamed of what is going on? If that is the case, nothing better could happen than to have it get out; might wake somebody up and cause a reform of the doubtful acts. All three of these people are part of whatever difficulty there is, but the youngest is the biggest fool, for if she goes on with it she is burdening herself with the problems of those much older and much more advanced than she is. It would be bound to sink her. What she ought to be doing, if she simply must have some sort of love affair with some one, is to find a nice innocent single man and not try to carry the relations of a man and wife who have been living together for fifteen years. One of the Commandments says something about this, I believe. As I have mentioned before, it might have been better if explanations had come along with these great laws of health and wealth—more of us might then pay some attention to them. They are the laws which we must use in self-defense. Ever look at them that way? Suppose, for instance, this case from the man's point of view grows up

and he leaves his wife for the younger girl. He is assuming nothing but her character. The girl is, or would be, assuming not only his character, but also that of the older woman. And any time either of them, the older people, had anything going wrong it would be reflected in the life and experience of the girl. It seems to me to be a rather big price to pay for whatever she hopes to get out of it. Read Deuteronomy verse 21, which begins: "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife—partner." The reason is not only that he or she is not your partner, but also that the desire is not apt to come to a good end as far as you are concerned. The man in this case must study and learn the inner meanings of his conjunction of Venus and Uranus in the sign Scorpio. The two women are close enough together, with their Sun positions in conjunction, to understand each other if the younger girl will abandon her folly.

No, F. A. E., born January 14, 1893. Have already explained why.

It doesn't look to me like an inferiority complex, V. M., born September 5, 1902. Your description of your reactions and the influences which have been operating in your life are not those which are typical of the fixation you mention. It is much more probable that the sensitivity of which you speak is the basis of the trouble. Self-confidence is what you need, and no one but yourself can give it to you. As a matter of fact, you already possess it, but are not using it. One of the ways—in fact, the most common—of robbing people of this desirable quality is in doing too much to help them—guiding and directing them too much, whether with love or dislike as the motive for the help. You are at present—and will be for a couple of years to come—in a negative emotional period, so don't trust your feelings and do all you can to eliminate your fears. Do something, anything, to assert your independence, and stick to it. It will be your salvation if you succeed in getting out in the world where you will have to stand up on your own two feet and make the grade. Designing, writing, analytical work, and anything connected with publishing or distribution are good lines for you to follow. Read philosophy and study the psychology of eliminating fear; but, whatever you do, be sure to apply the knowledge you gain, even a little at a time. Merely knowing how does no good. You must put it into actual experience and feel your strength growing day by day. You can do it. I hope you will make the necessary effort.

J. M. E., born September 11, 1912.—Yes. You have a good combination with the man born January 2, 1910; and if you both still think you are in love with each other when you are twenty-one years old, you will be right and should marry.

Cultivate your talents in design and astrology, D. C. J., born January 22, 1911.

You are beginning to see the light, C. J. W., born January 28, 1898, and it is a distinct pleasure to me to find a letter like yours in the general run of pessimistic sobs that find their way to my desk. Just a minute before getting your answer while I give you a hand with the rest of the customers. Here is a man who has lost his wife in death, trying to be both mother and father to his two children, had just lost his job when he wrote to me, with hospital bills and debts contracted by unwise management of his affairs, who does not blame politics, machinery or any one but himself for the jam he is in. He is also trying to fight his way back by giving service wherever he can, without false pride. Yet he is studying the laws of nature through occultism and has developed a faith that makes him look ahead with hope, instead of at the difficulties of the past. Not one word of his letter to me could be classed as sympathy grabbing. He is not foolishly sentimental; he is not hard-boiled. He does look straight at the problem with the courage of a hero. His horoscope is a good one, indicating the strong character he possesses, but I have seen others with as good possibilities who are not using half of their equipment. My advice to you, Mr. W., is to cultivate your use of the English language as much as you can, while taking up something in your spare time along selling lines. Your work in this world is eventually going to be something you will invent or evolve yourself, and it will be a peculiar individual service. The selling experience will develop your knowledge of people and practical application of business principles. You can eventually become quite wealthy if you will seek money only for the good you can do with it.

Sorry, D. G., but I cannot send you the epheemeris which you request. Write me and I will tell you where it may be obtained. I think Raphael's the best.

Cannot answer fatalistic questions, K. K. H., born March 23, 1908. Sorry.

Good for you, P. B. M., born July 23, 1895. You are getting along. It is the same story

of suffering through ignorance and finally seeing a spark of light here and there and eventually getting more and more that is worth while as life becomes more and more worth living.

"How critical you can be whenever you see any chance at all of coming out on top, which you generally succeed in doing, although it does cost you an effort sometimes," writes another of my admiring public, M. E. G., born January 27, 1909. Then she asks for my advice. And, oh! how she does complain. Her father doesn't give her the right kind of food. She is afraid she will not be well enough to take advantage of the good job she may get. Her boss is not a good man. Nothing is right. I'm evidently just one of the thorns in her side. It must be tough to be born into the wrong world. I'm glad I wasn't. On the other hand, maybe you haven't seen this world as it really is, Miss G. Take another look. Try to see the good in things. Your remark about my criticism is no more than that of a mirror into which people can look. I try to see them as they are, and take away enough of the bad to enable them to see something good. Why don't you cheer up? If you can't actually feel that way at first, try going through the motions and see how that makes you feel. Look out for getting morbid and pessimistic. And don't be trying to get things for nothing, either. Be willing to pay for what you get—you will pay, you know, and you might as well be willing.

Don't be in a hurry to marry just for the sake of marrying, O. D., born February 5, 1905. It is well that you have not made the error of jumping off the dock too soon, as it is, for you would have had three perfectly miserable years and all the consequences if you had taken the first opportunity that was offered. Glad to see you haven't fallen, even if you think something is wrong with you because you didn't.

The picture is in your own eye. How differently two people can see the same thing! D. G. C., born August 19, 1912, writes, "I certainly hope you are well paid for your consideration and tact in advising those who are in the dark, like myself." Compare that with some of the licks about how rough I am. You have gone through most of the bad vibrations of at least the first half of your life, Miss C., so it is now up to you to make everything count from now on. Be most careful of all your emotional reactions, especially if you follow up the artistic work of which you speak. Relations with the public would not

do you a great deal of good, so it would be wise for you to seek something where you can accomplish your ends from behind the scenes.

Doesn't look too good for the picture-show venture, Mrs. L. M. J., born December 23, 1880, for this year, although the man you mention has a fairly good aspect as far as his own particular interests are concerned. If you are in the deal, go ahead with the best of your ability, but don't put too much faith and trust in others for the balance of this year.

Strange as it may seem to both yourself and me, V. M. L., born November 1, 1903, his parents are right about it not being a good match. You would never be happy in married life with the man born May 31, 1905. Thank goodness, you didn't have to learn it the hard way.

Can't answer the general question, "What does the future hold for me?" This applies to B. E., born October 19, 1909, and many others.

Better wait another year before making any investments, Mrs. J. C. M., born December 18, 1868. My mother and father are both living and well and seem to me as companions when I can be with them, so I don't think you are so old. I figure mother and dad have twenty more years of accomplishment

ahead of them, and you, too, should feel that way about yourself. So a year's delay now in the purchase of property will not be as hard to take as you might think.

The planets are always moving, J. D., so it is impossible to tell you anything about their positions in relation to the Constellations unless you give a definite date. You can get all the information you want on this subject by putting together the information in an ephemeris for any desired year with the relation of the Zodiac to the Constellations as given in "The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology," by Robson.

Don't take him back merely because you don't want the other woman to have him, I. L. H., born March 8, 1891. Let go of all those troubles and live your own life. You can do it if you don't allow yourself the pleasure of feeling angry. Don't even try to want him back, for it would not be for the best, either for you, for him, or for the other woman. The divorce has been granted; it is better so. You will gain nothing trying to punish him. Look out for your own soul. You can't win with hate.

Yes, those occupations look good for both of you, A. C. G., born April 14, 1908. It also looks like a good matrimonial combination, as you very well know, for you don't even ask about that side of the matter.







# The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS

Miss Morris will help you to make friends



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, "Love Story Magazine," 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

HERE is a call from a lady of forty-four. She is very lonesome, now that her only daughter is married, and will welcome with open arms all Pen Pals. I am sure that there are lots of mothers who can sympathize and understand how H. L. T. feels, and will write to her. It doesn't take long to sit down and write just a few lines, which will mean so much to some one who is lonely. Also, H. L. T. promises to send a sample of her needlework to the first two Pen Pals who write her. Come on, now, you girls of forty-four, and help cheer up this lonesome friend of yours!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please find me some Pen Pals? I am a woman of forty-four, and have a wonderful daughter who was my pal until she was married a year ago. It nearly broke my heart to part with her, for she was all that I had left. I lost my husband eleven years ago, and my only son was killed thirteen years ago.

Please don't think me selfish, for I wanted her to be happy, and gave her my blessing willingly; but it changed things so for me. I do a lot of fancywork, and to the first two

ladies who write to me I am going to send a little gift of my own needlework.

I have traveled all through the West, and do hope that I get some Pen Pals real soon. I promise to answer all letters promptly.

H. L. T.

If you would like to know anything about the movies, boys, just write to J. M. O., for he is a moving-picture operator.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your Friendliest Corner? I am a boy, twenty-four years old, and will keep the rest for those who write to me.

I am a moving-picture operator, and have a surprise for the first twenty-five who write to me. Boys, get busy, for I am sure that I can tell you lots of interesting things, if you will only give me half a chance.

J. M. O.

Here's a girl living in Hawaii who is very lonesome and craves some Pen Pals. Won't all of the girls get going, and give Frenchy a break?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hawaii reminds one of many beautiful things, which is all true enough, but what are they when you're lonesome and crave some Pen Pals?

I am a girl of twenty-two, and am French. Won't some of you girls please write to me? I promise to answer each and every letter received.

FRENCHY OF HAWAII.

A. P. of Chicago would like to have thousands of Pen Pals from all over the world. It's a large order, big boy, and if you received a hundred would you be satisfied? I hope so.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: It sure would be a pleasure to correspond with thousands of Pen Pals from all over the world. I'm terribly lonesome, and receiving letters is a sure cure, so I'm depending on you boys to come to my rescue. I'm twenty years of age, tall, and am employed in a theater. Enjoy all modern sports, have oodles of snapshots to exchange, and can guarantee interesting letters.

A. P. OF CHICAGO.

Here are two sisters and a brother, all looking for some Pen Pals. They all dance on the stage and have traveled a lot, so could write some very interesting letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please try to get some Pen Pals for my sister, brother, and myself? We are lonesome orphans, and would love to hear from any one, anywhere.

We all dance on the stage, but Bubbles and I specialize in adagio dancing, and Bunny in tap dancing.

Bubbles, my brother, is eighteen years old, I'm fifteen, and Bunny's twelve.

We have traveled quite a lot, and think we can write some interesting letters.

BUBBLES, BUNNY, AND BUTTONS.

All you Southern belles get busy and write to Oklahoma Ruth, for she is coming to your land soon, and she may drop around to see you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm going South in October, and I can't decide where to go, so I want all the girls to write to me and tell me about their cities. I'll answer each one and send every one a picture of myself.

I am eighteen years old, have green eyes, naturally curly brown hair, and I am tall and slender.

I've written several stories and had them published in some of the leading magazines. Just write to me and I'll tell you all about it. My hobby is writing, and my letters are long. I live in Oklahoma, and I'm crying for the South.

OKLAHOMA RUTH.

M. G. of Pennsylvania is very fond of writing and receiving letters, and would enjoy Pen Pals from everywhere.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I hope to enter your large correspondence club? I am very fond of writing and receiving letters. I am twenty-two years old, have brown hair and eyes, and am a graduate of high school and of business college.

I enjoy dancing and all kinds of sports. I'd enjoy Pen Pals from everywhere, and am willing to exchange snaps with all who write to me.

M. G. OF PENNSYLVANIA.

I bet that surprise that Isobell of Pennsylvania has for one of the Pen Pals is going to be real nice.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there any one who would write to a young married woman of nineteen with a little son four months old? I promise I will answer every letter, and will send a surprise package to the first who answers.

I live near the greatest coal mine in the world and by the great Allegheny Mountains, so I can tell quite a few interesting things about each. Come on, all you girls between eighteen and twenty-five, and write to

ISOHELL OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Willie of Oklahoma calls letter writing a sport, and I agree with him. Let's see how many other boys think the same way.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonely widower longing for some Pen Pals. Won't some one please write to me? I am forty-five years old, six feet tall, weigh one hundred and seventy-five pounds, and have blue eyes and brown hair.

I have loads of time to write, as I call that sport. Get busy, all you men, and write to me, for I promise to answer all letters received.

WILLIE OF OKLAHOMA.

J. A. R. would like to hear from the boys who have done a little traveling.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man, eighteen years old, six feet tall, weigh one hundred and seventy pounds, have a light complexion, dark-brown hair, and blue eyes.

I am studying to be a commercial artist, also like dramatic art and dancing, but swimming is the only sport I like.

I hope some day to travel, so I would like to hear from boys who have done some traveling.

I am usually alone, and would be very happy to make Pen Pals of fellows eighteen to twenty-eight. I promise to answer all letters received.  
J. A. R.

Thelma of Nebraska would like to have some Pen Pals outside of the U. S. A.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: A lonesome girl from Nebraska would be glad to hear from Pen Pals from London or any other city in some country besides the United States.

I am fifteen years old, am five feet four inches tall, and have blond hair and blue eyes. I love to read, and am very fond of swimming, hiking, or any other sport.

Get busy, girls from everywhere, and write to me.  
THELMA OF NEBRASKA.

This little girl is only over from England a short while, and is very lonesome. Girls, both old and young, won't you please write to her?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an English girl, have been here only three months, and I still feel strange and lonesome. May I join your Friendliest Corner, as I would love to hear from some girls. Will answer all letters received. At home, my chief sports were swimming and dancing, but just at present I have no sports to keep me from being lonely. I'm twenty years of age, five feet in height, and have dark-brown hair and hazel eyes. I would like plenty of Pen Pals, young or old.  
AN ENGLISH MISS.

If you are interested in gardening, then write to this married woman, for she would like to exchange ideas and helpful hints.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from any one who is interested in gardening, for I would like to exchange ideas and helpful hints.

I am a married woman, and would like to hear from other married women who have grown-up daughters. I am in my late thirties.  
GARDEN PAL.

Jinny Frances loves dancing, swimming, tennis, golf, driving, and the movies are her hobby.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl, eighteen years old, and want some Pen Pals. I love dancing, swimming, tennis, golf, driving, and the movies are my hobby. I am an Ameri-

can, so come on, girls from everywhere, write to me.

Now, girls, what do you think I am—a blonde, brunette, or a redhead? Write soon and I'll tell you.  
JINNY FRANCES.

Here's a girl of seventeen who wants lots of letters from all over.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen, five feet seven inches tall, weigh one hundred and twenty-three pounds, and have brown, curly hair and hazel eyes. I play the guitar and love to swim.

I promise to answer every letter I receive, and hope that I get plenty.  
G. G.

Pennsylvania Al does not make friends very easily, so would like to have lots of Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I do hope you'll find a small space for me in your Friendliest Corner. I am a lad of twenty-two, and of a very retiring nature. I do not make friends easily, so would like to take advantage of your column to acquire some Pen Pals.

Would like to hear from men of twenty to twenty-five years of age who have accomplished something in life. I promise to answer all letters promptly.

PENNSYLVANIA AL.

Marie of Ohio would appreciate hearing from married women from thirty to forty years of age.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would appreciate hearing from married women about thirty to forty years of age from North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, and California. I have traveled quite a bit on the Eastern shore of the U. S. A. I am a brunette, five feet five and one half inches tall, weigh one hundred and fifty pounds, and have three children—two girls and a boy.  
MARIE OF OHIO.

Here we have a little girl in a big city, who is very lonely and would like to have some Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a little girl in a big city and am pretty lonely, for I live in the sticks, as some people would call it. I am fifteen years of age, have blue eyes, blond hair, and weigh one hundred and fourteen pounds. I am fond of all sports, especially swimming, and love to dance.

I would like you to help me find some Pen Pals. I'd like to hear from girls around

my own age from any place. I will answer all letters as soon as possible, and also will exchange snaps.

WANDA OF CHICAGO.

Won't some girls write to Hazel of Dexter? She is so sad and lonely.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am just a sad and lonely girl of sixteen, five feet two inches tall, and have blue eyes.

My father deserted us two years ago, and life is so hard, for there are six children. Won't some girls write to a lonely redhead?

HAZEL OF DEXTER.

Lou of Hudson certainly has traveled some for such a young girl, and I'm sure that her letters will be real interesting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think you can find room for a lonesome girl of seventeen? I have been in every State in the Union, also Europe, Canada, Mexico, crossed the Pacific Ocean, and have been to Asia. But, girls, I am lonesome. Won't some one write to me? I will tell them all about myself.

I do not care if they are tall or thin, rich or poor, just so they write. The first one who writes will receive a big surprise.

LOU OF HUDSON.

Boys, how would you like to hear about the South? Well, just drop a line to Tennessee Jack, and he will tell you all about it.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a boy of twenty-one, five feet nine inches tall, and have blond hair. Love all kinds of sports, and would like to hear from boys from every State in the Union.

Get busy, fellows, and write to this Southern boy, for I'll tell you lots of interesting things about Dixie.

I'm hoping that I get oodles and oodles of letters.

TENNESSEE JACK.

French Estelle has plenty of chums, but she loves to write letters, so she would like to have some Pen Pals from all over.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another little plea for friends. I'm eighteen years old, have blond hair, gray eyes, am five feet one inch tall, and weigh one hundred and eighteen pounds. I go to college and have plenty of chums, but I like to write letters, so won't

some one write? I promise to answer every one, and would like letters from foreign Pals, too, as I am a Canadian myself.

I play jazz and classical music, dance, play bridge, swim, and have a good time.

FRENCH ESTELLE.

Don't only fill the mail box of F. E. C., but make her buy a larger one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-four, am five feet six inches tall, and weigh one hundred and twenty-five pounds. I am very fond of horses, dancing, and swimming. I want Pen Pals, old or young, married or single, from all over the world. I will exchange snaps with all who send me theirs. Please, every one, hurry and fill my empty mail box.

F. E. C.

J. F. F. is a good sport and sure loves to dance.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think you could find room in your Friendliest Corner for one more lonely boy? I am thirty-three years old, have black hair and eyes, and weigh one hundred and fifty-two pounds. I am a painter and paper hanger, am a good sport, and sure do love to dance.

I love to write, and will answer all letters received.

J. F. F.

Hurry up, girls, and write to Al of Chicago, for she has so much time on her hands that she doesn't know what to do with it.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you try to get me some Pen Pals? I am twenty-one years old, Irish, good-natured, not bad looking, and my main hobby is letter writing. I love all kinds of sport, especially basket ball, and the one game I love to watch most of all is football, but, being a girl, I can't play the game.

I have so much time on my hands that I don't know what to do with it. So hurry up, girls, and write to little me.

AL OF CHICAGO.

Does A. V. K. like to receive and answer letters? Do fish like to swim? I'll say they do, and so she wants to receive lots of Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I am not what you might call lonely, yet, do I like to receive letters? And answer them? You bet I do.

I am fifteen, have blond hair, and am a lover of sports. My favorite is dancing.

I promise to answer all letters received, in not less than twenty-four hours. Girls, won't you please write to me, and start another chain of friendship with a friendly girl?

A. V. K.

All Pen Pals by the name of Mary get busy and write to Arline of Utah. She didn't say if she wanted me to write, but, anyhow, here's hoping that she gets lots of Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if you could find a Pen Pal for me? I am a married woman of twenty-three with three children, and my duties keep me at home a good deal, so I would love to have some one to write to.

I love sports, but do not have time for them. I would also like to hear from girls near my age who are named Mary, as I once had a wonderful friend by that name.

ARLINE OF UTAH.

Rhode Island Pal is waiting and hoping for a cloudburst of mail from boys from all over.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your happy circle and hope to have some Pen Pals?

I am a young man interested in all sports and entertainment. I would like to hear from men up to forty, and promise to answer all letters promptly. I'm waiting and hoping for a cloudburst of mail from boys from all over.

RHODE ISLAND PAL.

Mitzie of Baltimore is very fond of dancing and short-story writing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I have many friends, but would like to have some Pen Pals to correspond with—those who know how and can carry on a nice, clever, and intelligent conversation through letters.

I am a Jewish girl, twenty years old, five feet three inches tall, have gray eyes, and weigh one hundred pounds. I am fond of dancing and also short-story writing.

I am a high-school and business-school graduate, and hold a very responsible position. Will answer all letters, and also exchange snaps.

MITZIE OF BALTIMORE.

La Verna has just moved to a small town, and is very lonesome for some one to write to.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of sixteen, not bad looking, have red hair, dark-blue eyes, am five feet four inches tall, and weigh ninety-eight pounds.

I'm from St. Louis, Missouri, and have just moved to a small town. I get real lonesome, and would love to have some one write to me.

LA VERNA.

If you're fourteen or forty, nineteen or ninety, Anxious Ernie wants to hear from you, for she just loves to write and receive letters, and so far she hasn't any one to write to; but beware, little girl, for you soon will have lots of Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if my plea will reach some sympathetic persons.

Although I'm not lonesome, by any chance, I just love to write and receive letters, and, much to my regret, I haven't any Pen Pals.

Please, won't you girls all write to me, if you are fourteen or forty, nineteen or ninety? I promise immediate replies.

Here's hoping far oodles of Pen Pals and that I won't be disappointed.

ANXIOUS ERNIE.

Pennsylvania Dick is especially looking for some fellows who like to write.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am twenty-one years of age, six feet tall, have brown, wavy hair, and weigh one hundred and fifty-five pounds. I enjoy all sports, and am especially fond of dancing. My greatest desire is to find some Pen Pals who really like to write. How about it, fellows between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three? I'm willing to exchange snaps with any one who writes.

PENNSYLVANIA DICK.



# The Friend In Need

Department

CONDUCTED BY

Laura Alston Brown



**M**AN does not live by bread alone, nor, for that matter, by love alone. So many youngsters have the silly idea that love means excluding absolutely everything else from life, forgetting that there is any one else in the world than the loved one. Such a love is very narrow, and it takes its toll in boredom.

Real love should make everything else in the world twice as interesting. It should widen your outlook, instead of narrowing it. "Very Much in Love" has dropped all her friends, and finds that she has no way to amuse herself on the evenings when she can't be with the boy she loves. She dislikes going out with other people, but neither does she enjoy staying in alone. So what is the poor girl to do?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am nineteen, and for seven months have been keeping steady company with the most wonderful being on earth. I met him one night at a wedding, and he escorted me home. The week after that, he called at my home. Since then we just dropped all our friends—it seems as though it was done automatically—and have been keeping steady company with each other. But I didn't know what I was letting myself in for.

Let me tell you something about his daily program, and then you will know what I mean. He is going to college and has three more years to go. After school is through for the day, he goes home and helps his mother in the store. Toward evening he goes to gym; he is training to be a boxer. He is an amateur at present, and must always be in training. After he is through with gym, which is about eight thirty, on two nights out of the week he relieves his brother

at the store. Later he has homework to do. The other few days of the week, he comes over to the house.

Now, Mrs. Brown, of course, with such a full program, he is always tired, and so we just go out for a ride and usually stay home. Sometimes, on Sunday, we manage to take in a show, but he must work every other Sunday.

I used to have such good times before I started going with him. There wasn't a week that I didn't go to some cabaret, dance, party, or show. Now it's every night home, home, home; nothing to look forward to.

I know he would do anything in his power to help me. He keeps telling me so over and over, telling me that he loves me and is sorry that he can't show me all the good times he wants to. Mrs. Brown, I love him, so I'm always making excuses for him when people laugh and say that I'm foolish to stay home every night.

Perhaps you'll say I should try going out with some one else. Yes, I have tried it, but I didn't enjoy myself as much as I would have if I had stayed home with my friend. I didn't tell him that I had gone out, but I'm sure he wouldn't have minded, because I've joked around and told him that I was going to find some one to take me out the nights he was busy, and he said, if that would make me happy, I should go right ahead.

But what's the use? I wouldn't enjoy myself, and, anyhow, I haven't any friends left with whom to go, not even girl friends, because I dropped every one completely when I found out I was beginning to care so much.

The folks think he is ideal. I have met his mother and think she is very nice. Please don't tell me to ask him about our future. I just can't bring myself to that point.

VERY MUCH IN LOVE.

Now, look at it sanely, instead of driving your mind wildly around in cir-

cles. Even if you could see him every night in the week, you'd need other friends. Love isn't enough to fill a life; it will lose its savor if you don't have other things to vary the monotony, just as even the choicest diet would sicken you after a few weeks of an unvarying menu.

You need friendship. It is an essential part of life, and you have the time for it on those nights when the boy friend can't come around. Pick up your old friends, girls, and boys; make new ones. Even if you don't enjoy those evenings as much as you do the others, you'll enjoy them better than sitting alone at home and just waiting.

And perhaps you could join a gym class of your own, to keep yourself fit. Or take some evening classes to keep your mind in step with the boy friend's. You can be just as true, just as loyal, even if you don't have your mind on your love every waking moment. As a matter of fact, you're likely to be more loyal, because you're less likely to be dissatisfied.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Please help a distressed wife. I have been married five years, and am the mother of a darling baby girl.

Before my marriage and during the first years we were married my husband was so kind and loving. But two years ago, after the birth of our daughter, he changed.

He never brought the little surprises of former days any more, though he could well afford them, for he has a very well-paying job. And now he forgets to kiss me before he leaves for work.

Now, you know as well as I that two years without love and attention from your husband is more than any woman can bear. He goes out every evening, and doesn't come home until twelve o'clock and after. I have a suspicion that he drinks and sees other women.

An old friend of mine has been coming to see me lately, and, noting my unhappiness—for I still love my husband—he has been asking me to go away with him. I like this man as I would a brother, but he has loved me for a long time, so he says, and thinks that in time I would learn to care for him.

He also thinks a great deal of my little girl. I know if it were not for her I should try leaving my husband and see if that would bring him to his senses, but as things are now I don't know what to do. He does not say that he no longer cares for me, but he makes no excuses for staying away at night. He doesn't abuse me; he never has. He is just polite.

DESPERATE.

In the days when this was entirely a man's world, when it was almost impossible for a woman to get along alone, there was some excuse for such muddled and cowardly thinking as this. But it is the twentieth century, the day of the emancipation of woman, when no one has to give up her right to self-respect in order to hold a meal ticket.

Are you so poor a creature, "Desperate," that you cannot decide either to accept the love your husband expects you to assume after all these years of marital devotion, or else to get out on your own two feet and make your own way? Must you go straight from one man's arms to another's, to be passed around like an inanimate sack of potatoes? Can't you do without a pair of trousers to lean on?

For shame! You're a human being, not a clinging vine. Get up on your hind feet and walk upright, as the Lord intended when he made you. Fight the issue out with your husband and give him his chance to make good, or else leave him under your own steam. You don't need the help you get from the sort of "old friend" who waits his chance to tempt a weak woman. Your "friend" could pose as the serpent in the Garden of Eden without even a change of costume.

Read the letter which follows and see if you still want to follow that path.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I want to give some advice to those girls who want to marry before they are twenty-one, and to the ones whose cry is: "I can't forget him! I can't give him up!" It isn't easy to forget or give up a loved one, but I did it, and I am not a particularly strong-willed person.

I married at the age of seventeen, and had four children before I was twenty-one. During those four years, I met and fell in love with my mate. That is the only way I can describe it.

He had every quality I admired in a man. If only I had waited till I was older before marrying!

I did the weak and wrong thing; I went out with him three and four times a week for two years. Daily my love grew stronger and my self-respect weaker. I got to the stage where I disregarded morality, home, husband, and children.

Oh, what my good, true husband must have suffered! He worshiped me and never said a word when I told him I loved Art; just let me know that my happiness was uppermost in his thoughts.

Well, Art and I finally broke up, due to his mother, God bless her! I went wild then. I drank and smoked. Still I couldn't forget him. I would drink hooch until I was paralyzed, but my first sober thought was of Art.

After a year and a half of that, we moved to the country where I was born and raised. Here I am trying to come back. Oh, Mrs. Brown, the pity and futility of it! I am an outcast, scorned by people who have known me from childhood. Can't they see I am repentant? I have turned to God, and I am sure He has forgiven me. Why can't they? Can't they see a kind word, an invitation to their homes, or an afternoon call would help me?

Other women have little parties for their children, but mine are never invited. Mrs. Brown, what can I do? Every morning I get up, clean myself and the children, do the housework, thinking some one might come; but they never do. My poor, innocent children are being punished for my waywardness. It's wrong; it's cruel!

I have forgotten Art; at least, the pain is gone from my heart. But the pain of a woman scorned is far greater than that of love.

#### TRYING TO RISE.

The way of the transgressor is hard, and not the easiest part of the punishment is watching innocent loved ones suffering.

If there were only yourself to consider, I might advise you to stick it out and try to regain the respect you have forfeited. But the babies mustn't suffer. For their sake, play the coward. Move to some community where the

story is unknown, so they may have a chance at natural companionship, a real start in life, unhampered by the ugly past.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Perhaps, after she hears my story, "One Who Regrets" will realize what a lucky woman she really is.

When I was fifteen years old, I met a boy with whom I fell madly in love. We went everywhere together, and then I discovered I was to become a mother. Of course, I went straight to the boy and told him; but, instead of proving his manhood in the only possible way, he rushed into marriage with another girl to get out from under.

I had never gone out with any other boy. The only place I ever went was to a show, and I only went with him. So, you see, I hadn't had my share of fun, either.

My mother is a very nervous woman, so I went away to a city near by to have my baby. Oh, Mrs. Brown, she is such a healthy, pretty baby! I can hardly believe she is all mine.

When my baby was three months old, mother became very ill, and had to be sent away. I was forced to come back home to keep house for dad. And he, poor thing, has so many worries that I can't tell him about baby. So I am boarding her, and go to see her once a week.

Mrs. Brown and readers, do you think I have a right to keep my baby? Some friends of mine, childless, think I'm a fool not to place her for adoption. Still others, who have children of their own and know the real meaning of motherhood, advise me to keep her. I couldn't give her up; I'd go crazy, I think, without her.

Some day I may find a man who will take us both. I'll make a home for her then, and perhaps Heaven will send some brothers and sisters. Believe me, I certainly will appreciate a good man.

Don't you see, "One Who Regrets," how lucky you are? You have your husband and those three fine boys. You don't know how you'd suffer if you couldn't see those babies. Only God and I know how much I miss mine.

#### UNLUCKY MOTHER.

Of course you mustn't give her up, when you want her so much, dear. Once you're able to take her home and keep her with you, she'll have the finest sort of care, I know. Babies thrive best with their own people.



But isn't there some way we could fix it for you to get her now? Do you suppose that if you told your father you wanted to take in the baby of an unfortunate friend, he would object? In this case the end would justify the falsehood, I'm sure.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am writing to ask your advice about the situation which is arising to mar my otherwise happy home.

I am twenty-one years old, and have a chubby young son of seven months. My husband is the best there is, and I love him dearly.

Now, here is my trouble: My husband is of a very affectionate nature, and just loves to be petted all the time. He is always hugging or kissing me. Before Sonny came that was my delight; but now that our much-longed-for baby has come, I don't seem to be able to respond so enthusiastically, and he doesn't like it.

The nights we used to spend with each other are gone. I feel so tired I am ready to drop at the end of the day. On Sunday there is the baby to wash and feed. I never have time, and Sunday was always hubby's day before. He is beginning to complain of neglect, and I'm afraid he might go out for his loving. It's tearing my heart to bits.

Won't you please help me? Won't some of your married readers give me some advice?

INA.

I know what incredibly hard work taking care of a home and even one active baby can be. But I think, dear, if you made a budget of your time, you could manage to get through the day without being quite so tired.

Make a list of every single duty you have, and, if possible, arrange the weekly tasks so that they are evenly divided throughout the week. For example, don't attempt to do your heavy cleaning, washing, and ironing all on the same day. You can divide up the cleaning and spend an hour or two doing one room thoroughly each day, instead of frittering your strength away on all of them together.

Then, if you do your own laundry, perhaps you'll find it easier to do part of it each day, instead of having one

wash day and exhausting yourself over it. And, my dear, if you can possibly afford it, even if it means doing without a few luxuries, it would pay you to invest in some labor-saving devices and save your strength for living. A washing machine, for example, would give you many more hours of leisure each week.

Then you ought to arrange things, dear, so that when baby is having his nap you can lie down for a few minutes, too, either to read or perhaps just to relax. It will be remarkable how much more rested you'll be at the end of the day. If you teach baby to be self-reliant, to play by himself without bothering you, you'll have much more time to yourself. Get him a few blocks or rattles and leave him alone. Don't get him used to having you amuse him, and he'll grow into a more resourceful youngster than if you tag him all the time.

Another thing you might do would be to combine with one or two other young mothers who have your trouble. Perhaps you could all club together to get some one to take care of the youngsters for a few hours a day, and give you a rest, or you could alternate with each other taking the children to the park. You could help each other with your shopping, so you wouldn't all have to do it every day. All those things take their toll of your strength, and even the little help you can give each other will add up tremendously in the end.

One more hint. When you have the evening meal in the stove, get into a warm tub and fresh clothing, powder and primp a bit, and greet friend husband with a kiss. He'll be delighted, and you'll feel much better than if he catches you in your work clothes, all bedraggled and hot. Put him to work to help you, too, if necessary to give you time in the evenings. Let him learn to give baby his bath and put him

to bed, and help with the dishes. Then you can give him all the loving his heart desires.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Maybe if I tell my story "Happy and Happier" will take your advice. I have been married thirteen years. I kept my marriage a secret for two and one half years.

It was wartime, and Harry and I wanted to be married before he went away. I didn't want my mother to worry over Harry as my husband; therefore, the secrecy. We were married nine months before Harry sailed.

Shortly after my marriage, my sister-in-law's cousin came to visit her, and, as we all lived together, I met him. He, Jack, fell madly in love with me and followed me everywhere. Of course, Harry was very jealous, and he took to drink.

I loved Harry dearly, but I couldn't convince him that it was my folks who were pushing Jack and me together all the time. Finally, I got so angry at Harry I went with Jack to spite him.

After Harry sailed to France, I gave Jack up—and ruined his whole life. He has never married, and only a short time ago he told his cousin he loved me still and always would.

Harry and I are very happy now. We have a darling little daughter. But let me tell you, "Happy," we went through an awful lot of unhappiness to get happiness, and one life was ruined.

You can't help meeting other men, and that becomes a bigger thing to your husband than to your boy friend. My advice is either to tell of your marriage or wait until you can. Then you can really sign yourselves "Happy and Happier."

A GIRL WHO DID.

It's an impossible situation, this semi-married state, guaranteed to try the greatest love to the breaking point. I hope these two children don't let their romantic tendencies run away with their common sense.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Let me start from my early childhood, for that is where the trouble all began, I believe. As a child we—my sisters and I—never knew what it was to have toys. I really don't know how we managed to amuse ourselves; dolls, skates, dishes were unknown in our lives.

As I grew older, friends, both girls and boys, were forbidden until I reached the

grand old age of eighteen. To suggest or discuss any mandate was out of the question! The motto, "Children should be seen, and not heard," was the watchword in our home.

As I grew to womanhood, things didn't change much, except that I was allowed—and when I say "allowed" I mean it, for even after I was engaged to be married I had to ask permission to go out!—to go with a few boy friends. My mother never asked for our confidence and never gave us hers. It was as if we were living with strangers. My father never bothered his head about us; he let my mother do all that.

When it came time to go to business—which I did at the age of fifteen—there was no choosing a career; it was just go out and get a job, no matter what.

At twenty-three I married, and for the first time in my life I didn't have to ask permission to go any place. The first two years of my married life were the happiest in my whole twenty-five years. We worked together, hubby and I, to save for a rainy day, and it sure was glorious.

A year later, our darling baby daughter came, and I thought my cup of happiness was full. But now, at twenty-eight, all the suppressed longings and desires of my early years are coming to the fore, and I have no way of letting them out.

I'm miserable. If only my mother had not kept us so strict when we were younger, this stored-up energy, as it were, would not now be making me miserable and discontented with my home, husband, and baby. I am afraid it is too late to remedy the past, but how can I find an outlet now for these longings and desires?

DISCONTENTED.

But what is it you want now, "Discontented"? You can't go back now to dolls and dishes, can you? Or, if you want to, get them for baby, and play with her. She'll appreciate a sympathetic playmate.

I'm afraid it's not the early suppression which is bothering you now, though; it's your self-pity which is choking off your enjoyment of your present life. You have everything—a home, a husband, a baby. If you want to go out for good times, you've hubby to take you; and if you want to play, there's baby to play with. She's much better than a lifeless doll.

Perhaps you're suffering from in-

growing boredom. Have you a hobby? Why don't you try gardening? Not just throwing a few seeds into a few holes in the ground, but working to make your garden a show spot in the town. That's the sort of thing which can hold your interest over an interval of years, for a garden needs time for full growth and development.

Have you any talents? Perhaps you could go in for clothes designing on a small scale, for yourself and for friends, if you're handy with a needle. Perhaps you can sing a bit, or like to strut about in borrowed plumes. I'm sure there's some sort of dramatic club you can join, then, to liberate your energies.

There are all sorts of things you can learn to make—and there's no satisfaction greater than watching something grow beneath your hands—rugs, baskets, perhaps even small tables and bookcases. You can go in for batik dyeing, or for decorating vases and china. Some girls are learning how to work silver, and are making the most entrancing jewelry.

I'm sure that the "Y" must either run some art-and-crafts classes or know where you can get such instruction in your town. If you're interested, I know you can find enough things to more than fill your life.

Here's a letter written to "Dissatisfied." It's a good one for you to study.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I would like to shake that silly child who calls herself "Dissatisfied" until her teeth rattle. Why, she doesn't realize what wealth she possesses! The idea of any one being dissatisfied with what she has is beyond my comprehension. I only wish I had half. To have a good husband, a nice home, two darling children, enough money, good health, and her own time are riches untold. Any one of the bunch would be fine, but all—oh, my! There aren't many girls who are so lucky. If she had to get up early and punch a time clock every morning, peck at a typewriter all day, go home at night so tired she wouldn't have the ambition to do anything but just fall into bed, she would have something to fuss about.

Her husband must be a model, because she says he stays home in the evenings and, even packs his own lunch. I didn't think there were any like him left. He, so she says, has never been cross or harsh to her in their four years of married life. Can you imagine the wife of such a man being disloyal to the sacred vows she took at the altar, considering leaving him and even taking the children he loves. What an awful break she must be giving the man she promised to love, honor, and obey! Marriage is not a thing to be taken lightly, because it is, or ought to be, for life.

I can think of a million things she could find to fill up her time. Just to have a house to call your own, and two kiddies to love, would be all I needed. What fun I could have, making little clothes for the babies, trying out new recipes, visiting my other married friends. Just getting out for a long walk would be lovely.

And then, at the end of the day, to have a husband who was really true to you to spend the evening with—what more can she want? What if he spent his money for hunting dogs and booze the way "Weakenings" husband does? Then she would have something to fuss about. And, last but not least, what if she had to walk the streets and wear out shoes hunting for a job, day after day, always to be met by a frown, and not to be able to even put in an application? Until a girl has done that, she can't appreciate a home enough.

I speak from experience. It is enough to make you want to jump in the nearest river and end your misery. I thought I was going to have my own home, not so long ago, but found my fiancé was untrue; and, although it was a shock and a disappointment, I'm glad I found out in time. I'm trying not to let it destroy my faith in men, because I know there are plenty of fine ones yet. But how are you going to find them? So I'll just keep on hunting a job, and maybe I'll find my happiness later. HOPE.

I'm sure you will, "Hope." Both the job and the man may be just around the corner.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've just finished reading "A Disgusted Redhead's" letter, and I've decided to state my experience and its results, because our "trials" were so much alike.

I, too, am sweet sixteen—and never been kissed by the right boy yet! Like "Disgusted Redhead," I began going with the boys when very young. But I have always

seemed a little older than I actually am, not only in looks, but in actions and feelings as well.

Up until a year ago last January, I went with several different boys steadily for a few months at a time. Seven months was the longest I went with any one boy. And I tried to imagine myself in love with each one, only to grow tired and look around for a new playmate after a short time.

Well, one New Year's Eve I went with a boy whom I had been secretly admiring and, I thought, loving for two or three months. I went with him for about eleven months.

For the first six months he was the perfect sweetheart. Then he graduated from school and went North for his vacation. He stayed three months, during which time I received only two or three brief letters from him, assuring me of his love and planning for the day we could be married. Of course, I swallowed it all, hook, line and sinker.

Then, in the fall, he left for work in the North, promising to come back for me. During the summer and fall, I went with other boys, but didn't seem to enjoy myself at all. Finally, I began to realize that his letters were becoming few and far between, and were touched, more or less, with conceit.

During the whole time I had been going with him, he practically demanded that I refuse to date a certain boy whom he disliked. I rebelled, and began going with this boy quite often, until, before long, he became my dearest pal.

So when the boy friend's actions became so questionable, I appealed to my true pal. Here is the advice he gave me, and you'll never know how true it is until you try it.

He advised me to "be my age, and leave this deeper stuff for older people." He said that girls of my age shouldn't be trying to analyze the workings of our hearts at such an early stage, but should be out enjoying just the physical pleasure of being alive and young.

We're trying to act too old; we are playing with the deepest emotion of human kind, and if we don't quit now, it will burn and burn deeply.

Mrs. Brown, I'm afraid that I've taken up a good deal of your time, but if you will be kind enough to print this, I'm hoping that "A Disgusted Redhead" will act upon it and have as happy results as I have had. We're only young once, so be happy and gay. Too soon youth fades away.

MARTHA.

Bright child! Step to the head of the class. If more girls followed your policy, they'd keep their hearts whole

longer, and they'd cut down considerably on the overhead for headache powders.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I come to you for advice? I need it terribly. I have asked the folks, but they are prejudiced, so I want a neutral person to decide. Perhaps your readers can help me.

I have been married eight years. Although my husband doesn't make much money, we have managed to be very happy in the past. We have four of the dearest children, and we both adore them.

Until six months ago, we were very happy, and then my trouble started. My husband met the other girl—I won't say woman, for she is hardly that. He started going with her, keeping his salary so he could give her a good time.

She is the daughter of wealthy parents, and, of course, had to go to places that took all his salary. He hasn't given me any money in a long time. He began to see lovely homes. Soon he thought our humble home, where we had been so happy, wasn't good enough for him, so he left it to go to her. He then began asking for a divorce, telling me to give the children away for adoption.

I can't consider giving up the children. When he left home he went to the home of this girl. She doesn't live in this city; she lives out of town. She didn't know he was married, but she did know his mother's telephone number. She could have made inquiries before she took the fatal step. But she did nothing of the kind.

She paid his fare to her home, where they were married, and then came back to this city.

After they were married, she asked his mother to the religious ceremony. My mother-in-law was shocked, and told the girl he was already married.

Then they came to see me. Mrs. Brown, I saw all my dreams collapse. They wanted me to prosecute my husband, but, after all, they were to blame; they should have made inquiries first.

I wouldn't prosecute, and saw to it that they didn't. But that doesn't excuse him. He has broken my heart and my faith in mankind. Now, here is my problem: My husband wants to come back. He begged me to forgive his mad act, as he calls it. He says he loves me, and never loved any one else. He is at a loss to account for his folly, and begs me to have him back.

Although I love him even after what he did, I am undecided. My pride has been hurt, of course, but there are the children to

consider. They love him and are always asking for him.

Do you think that, after what he has done, we will ever find happiness? Would there always be a barrier between us? Will you ask your readers to help, please? I will be watching for a reply.

TRUDY.

Don't you marvel at the cold-blooded ferocity with which some women regard all others of their sex? To such a woman, a man can do no wrong. He can only be wronged by other women.

It seems to me that no woman, no matter how great her pride, could sit back, as "Trudy" did, watching her husband impose himself as an unencumbered man on an impressionable, silly young girl, and not lift a finger to expose the fraud. After all, he took this girl out openly; there was no sneaking. They were in the city where he made his home. The girl had every right to assume that, if he had a wife, either his people or the wife herself would have the decency to come forward with that information, if the man himself were such an inconceivable cad as to attempt to conceal it.

You have a good bit of the blame to bear yourself, "Trudy." A man doesn't wear the badge of servitude written over his face. If you were thinking of your children before, when it was to some purpose, you would have invoked the law to make your husband take his rightful place as their father and stopped everything before he went this far. Your pride seems rather a selfish affair.

As for this sudden repentance, it doesn't seem very sincere to me. I have always been skeptical of deathbed conversions. They remind me of that little verse:

When the devil was ill,  
The devil a monk would be.  
But when the devil got well—  
The devil a monk was he!

It's easy enough for a man facing prosecution to profess a change of

heart. I shouldn't be surprised if that was the motive back of your husband's sudden desire to be readmitted to the bosom of his family. A man who can consider abandoning his children has some tall explaining to do when he conceives a sudden parental devotion. Only moral or mental insanity can explain the attitude of a bigamist. Do you want to take a chance on such a man, "Trudy"?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: In an old issue I picked up to reread recently, I ran across "Broken-hearted Wife's" letter. Now, I want to tell you what I think of any woman who will take abuse from her husband.

I lived with my first husband ten years. We traveled about all the time, and always lived in hotels. My husband was jealous of me, though I did my very best to keep myself unto myself. But you know hotels are bad places for a girl of sixteen, and that was the age I was when we were married.

I was not bad looking. That is not vanity; it is the truth. And that made my position much worse.

Well, to make a long story short, I stood his jealousy as long as he took it out only in words, but one day, ten years after we were married, he struck me.

I picked up a water pitcher and laid him out cold. Then I gently, but firmly, dragged him into the hall, packed his clothes, and put them by him. Then I got me a great big padlock and put it on my door till I could get ready to leave.

I came home to my folks, got a divorce, and, after a year, married again. I now have a home, a car, and maybe some day I will get the only other thing I want, a baby. I am as happy as any woman can be, even if I did waste ten years on a cad who was not worth it.

Mrs. Brown, I have an idea that you will think I was not quite ladylike in being so rough on Number One, but had you put up with him as long as I did, that blow would have cracked something for you, too, I think.

LISBETH.

Good for you, "Lisbeth." It may not have been ladylike, but I'll wager it was effective. That man knew you were thorough, when he woke up, and the headache probably made him think twice about abusing a woman afterward.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a married woman, the mother of two fine boys. My husband is six years older than I. We've been married seven years.

Last summer I went on a visit to see my people and to bring his mother back with me. He was unable to go. While I was gone, he met a woman, married, with one baby. We all knew her husband.

Well, my husband got to going over there pretty often, and once she came down and asked him to take her home. He was all by himself at the house, and she knew it. He took her home, and it wasn't very long before she came down again and asked him to take her out. Her husband was working nights. My husband took her to a show.

Now, Mrs. Brown, I had always loved my husband too much for my own good. He is so good and loving to me, and before this happened I was very happy. You see, I never thought he'd ever do anything like that.

He says he knew he was doing wrong, but she was always telling him she never got to go anywhere, and asking him to come up and talk to her of nights, as her husband didn't want her to stay alone with the people they were living with.

She's one of those women who have to have a man's attention. I got acquainted with her after I came home.

But, Mrs. Brown, I know my husband was to blame, too. He was old enough to know better. He tells me he felt sorry for her and just never thought. And he says he loves me more than any one in the world. He is good to me. This is the first time anything like this has happened.

But I can't trust him or respect him now. I don't know if I love him or not. I know I don't care as much as I did once. This happened eight months ago, and I've not got over it yet. I've tried, Mrs. Brown, but I guess I'm not one of those forgiving women.

You see, she will always be between us. If it weren't for my boys, I know I'd have left long ago. But I have weak lungs, and I couldn't touch his money if I went.

If I left, I would go away some place where I know no one. I'm no angel, Mrs. Brown, but I can't think why a man will risk his happiness and his wife's respect just to be nice to another woman.

Every one knew us where he was, but he didn't care about that. Do you think I will ever care for him again, or shall I leave? There will never be any other man for me. I'm not made that way.

Mrs. Brown, I know he never did what every one thinks he did, but he made people talk. I'm young, and every one says

I'm good looking. I've had plenty of chances to step out, too; but I always said I never went anywhere without my husband.

WEST COAST WIFE.

My dear, you've been a silly little fool, and the only crime your husband was guilty of was in letting you take this tragic attitude of the injured wife.

What was it your husband did that was so terrible? He spent a few hours in the company of a woman you all know, and whose husband you all know. He was lonely with you away, and she was lonely with her husband working. Is it such a heinous crime for friends to get together? There was no attempt at deceit; neither of them neglected their marital duties.

It's just because your neighbors have such dirty minds and tongues, and because you have deliberately allowed your jealousy to grow, that this malicious gossip arose. If you had not fed the story by your attitude, it would have died down in a week, since there was no real basis for it. But you keep the talk alive by this ridiculous pose.

The wisest thing to do, "West Coast Wife," is to let the matter drop and be thankful if your husband consents to let it go at that. If he were a vindictive man, he might resent the needless suffering you must have caused him in the last year.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am writing at your request for letters from people who have been married twenty-five and fifty years. We celebrated our twenty-fifth anniversary last October. I was married on my twenty-first birthday, and my husband is a year and three months older than I. So we were both young and foolish when we were married, and neither of us had anything to get married on.

One year and nine months later, our girl was born. I can tell the world it was hard, uphill work until we got daughter through grammar and high school and gave her a musical education. I worked until seven years ago, but we always had one purse and went fifty-fifty in all things.

Well, we have always got along great. All the disagreements we have had were over money, and nothing serious at that.

When we first came to live in this city, people told me they thought we were a newly married couple, because when you saw one you saw the other, too. We are never parted, except when my husband is at work.

I have everything I can wish for, in reason. I have to be careful not to wish too frequently, for, the first thing I know, I get whatever I've expressed a fancy for. My husband thinks there is nothing too good for me. He says there are not many who would have gone through what we have together and stood the test.

We've never had any help from any one. When I first moved here, people thought my daughter was my sister.

My mother and dad have been married fifty years. So you can show "Smiling Bach" there are two in one family who have stood the test. It seems as if the longer we live together, the more we think of each other.

My daughter says she did not know what it was to hear people scrap until she visited in other girls' homes. I am awfully sorry for "Smiling Bach," for as he gets older he will need a companion more and more.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY.

I told you so, "Smiling Bach"! You see, these are the people who never get into the headlines.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Like "Hubby's Sidekick," I get a real wallop from the problems in your columns. Some of them completely bowl me over.

I would like to say a few things regarding the letter written by "Hubby's Sidekick." I agree with her that mutual respect is necessary to a successful marriage, but I really believe she is in love with her husband and doesn't know it. I wonder if she has had many hardships since her marriage? The truest test is trouble.

I, too, married a good-natured, kind-hearted fellow. I had already given my love to another, but he was terribly conceited. I wanted very much to have a home and children, having been raised in an orphanage, so I broke off with Gene.

Then I met Ted. He was different from most fellows, and I couldn't help but admire him for the good qualities which Gene lacked. So I married Ted.

We have been married three years. A year ago, Ted was working steady and we had moved to an apartment of our own, because we expected a little one. I took sick, was in bed for a month, and there are still only two of us.

That is when I began to realize what Ted

meant to me. He never became impatient, and never spoke a word of disappointment. He worked all day and was up with me all hours of the night. Everything we had saved went for doctor's bills. Then, four months ago, he was laid off work. It has been all we could do to keep the table going. Our rent is overdue, and we have borrowed to keep up our insurance. He is working at odd jobs now, and through it all has kept smiling and cheering me up.

I am expecting a little one soon, but I am unable to prepare for it as I would like. Ted didn't want me to chance it again, but I want more than ever to have children. He has insisted on my taking treatments to make me stronger for the ordeal, and so we are also piling up a big doctor's bill.

I now realize that he means everything to me. I don't think he knows that I didn't love him when we were married, and that is the one secret I have kept from him.

You girls who are disgusted with all men, what do you think of mine?

To "Grieving," and others in her position, I would give our unwritten rules for happiness:

1. If you have a "past," forget it. Not only your own, but your husband's—or wife's—as well.

2. Take each day as it comes and make it successful. This is much easier than planning a whole lifetime. I don't mean we shouldn't plan ahead in material things, but worrying about what might happen to-morrow will make any one grouchy.

3. Never go to sleep angry with one another.

4. Never have secrets from each other.

5. Always be willing to admit when you are in the wrong.

6. Remember, marriage means giving as well as taking.

HAPPY HOUSEWIFE

Most of us, it seems to me, expect too much of life. We don't allow for the small irritations, for the daily grind. We think life should be all peak and no valley. Those are the kind of wives who fill the divorce courts when the first novelty and excitement of marriage have worn off.

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"Hubby's Sidekick" and "Happy Housewife," on the other hand, have started off with a minimum demand on life, and so they are likely to achieve



that and more. They can't fail to be happy. "May" and "Rosebud" and others of their kind would find it profitable to cultivate a little of this humility.

"Just Anxious," sorry I can't agree with your friends. I don't believe in superstition. Lilyan, Harry sounds rather a prig. But tell him about the coming event and give him a last chance to be human. You really should have denied that story; it's no good swapping horses in midstream. "His Little Brown-eyed Darling," you were right. If he prefers you while still going with other girls, it's more of a compliment.

"His Real Sweetheart," you are very young yet, dear, and perhaps your mother is just trying to get you to wait without antagonizing you. I don't think she'd worry about being paid back if she didn't feel that, for your own sake, you ought to take your time. "Silent of South Dakota," good for you. "Worried Rosette of Brooklyn," get your divorce first. I think your husband has had enough chances. And after you're free you can decide on the future.

"Disgusted Billie," why did you go out with him so long, if he was that kind? I think your trouble is that you can't tell a good man from the other sort. Learn to discriminate. "M. of Louisville," write to the circulation department of the magazine for full particulars. "A Jealous Husband," laugh

at his accusations. Maybe you can laugh him out of it. "Sunny Jill," I think that, after five failures, you'd be justified to give it up. Get your divorce.

"Desperate Bride," your letter shows that neither of you has the slightest conception of what marriage means. It might be better for you to part now. "Lovesick Girl," well, isn't it better that you found out before you were tied to him? "A Sentimental Fool," she doesn't sound like the sort who would change. I'm sure you could find some more trustworthy woman. "Bubbs," I'm sorry that I can't find room for every letter in my department. But if you'll send me your address, I'll be glad to answer by mail.

"A Sensible Flapper," "Justice Preferred," "Happy at Last," "Billie," "A Reader," "Violet," "Sweet Sixteen," "Hopeful Nell," "Sunny Flapper," "The Brown-eyed Girl," "Hubby's Wife," and "True-blue Lou," thank you all. Write again.

"Loved By Every One," the best advice I could possibly give you would be to forget boys for three more years and learn your arithmetic. And the same advice applies to "Still Love Dixie." "Hoping and Waiting," you're much too young to worry over love. "Baby Girl," if you try to leave home before you're eighteen, he'll find it very easy to have you sent away. Try to stick it out, dear.

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

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